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[GREEK MEETS GREEK.]

LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kendale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

Fair is she as the dreams young poets weave—
Bright eyes, and dainty lips, and tresses curly;
In outward loveliness a child of Eve.
But cold as nymph of Lurley. Thomas Hood.

The setting sun was gilding September woods, and casting patches of golden light upon the velvet-like lawns of the park, when Eugene Fernandez took his way towards Maberly, intent on giving his lesson to Florence Random and the Lady Juliette. He thought only of the latter; of how she would look and smile, and what she would be dressed in. Would she be sad or merry? Would the burden of the great secret which they held between them weigh down those wonderful blue eyes and quench the brightness of their light? The secret which they held between them!—she, meanwhile, utterly unconscious that he was a sharer in that burden, that he knew of that wild marriage—nay, that he was the bridegroom who was never to be a husband! Could he go on all his life and keep that secret as he had promised to keep it? Something told him that he could not—it was more than human effort that was required of him. Fate mocked him with what seemed like a fiendish cruelty, it placed this adored bride near to him, it called upon him to see her and to speak to her almost daily, it exacted from him patience, humility, and quietude, it called upon him to sacrifice his feelings as a human being, to trample his human hopes and his human nature in the dust.

There was his promise, signed, sealed, and stamped—his promise that, for a consideration in money, he would never urge his husband's claim upon the wife whom he had married. How mean, detestable, vile, and paltry the part he was required to play upon the world's stage. And yet there was no fault with which he could charge himself justly. The woman whom he was bound to consider as his mother had lain at the mercy of the law; would have been condemned unless

he had stepped forward to save her from imprisonment, hard labour, and disgrace. Then Lady Juliette herself, while seeking wildly for some means of extricating herself from the cruel fate which she dreaded, had appealed to him (all unconscious of who he was), in her frenzied terror. They had served each other's purpose in matters where not even affection and respect, far less love or passion, were concerned. Eugene had given to Juliette protection, and Juliette had given to Eugene money, and now they were man and wife!

The stupendous thought made the brain of Fernandez whirl; the magnitude of the situation was so vast—man and wife! Those solemn words had been addressed to them, "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

She was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh before the law, ay, and in the sight of Heaven also; and meanwhile there was not a pulse in his frame which did not throb and vibrate with ecstasy at her approach, there was not a thought in his soul which did not flow towards her even as the rivers flow down to the deep.

He stood now before the marble, terraced steps of the lordly mansion where she dwelt. There were the flowers, the vases, and the statues; there was the large pond, where the stately swans were sailing, majestic as those proud dames, Juliette's compeers. The whole scene was so expressive of lordly, aristocratic dignity, patrician calm, superb repose, that, oppressed with the grandeur, crushed down by the magnificence, Fernandez threw himself upon the grass and gnashed his teeth with rage.

A huge, spreading oak sheltered him from the eyes of those who might have been walking on the terraces, or looking through those plate-glass windows, behind which gleamed the heavy curtains of ruby or turquoise coloured satin.

Fernandez put his face to the cool green grass, despair and wrath were in his soul, it was so hopeless to imagine that that calm young heroine, with pale cheek, cold Grecian features, and steadfast, quiet eyes, who seemed to have vowed herself to a

life of self-sacrifice, self-denial, charity, and labour, would ever, or could ever, love him. Why, if in the course of years any change passed over that lofty spirit, if she ever owned or submitted herself to the yoke of passion, it could never be such as would be conferred upon him that could awaken the spirit of love in that chaste, cold heart. No, it would be some gallant soldier, some brilliant politician, some world-renowned poet, who must win her at the last, if ever she were to be won; some man, favoured by birth and fortune, who, aided by these, would be enabled to make the talent he possessed shine as a beacon-light upon the earth.

"For me," sobbed Fernandez, "what talent I possess must be hidden in a napkin now and evermore, like that of the cowardly servant in the parable. I am a slave, a slave ground down and bound down!"

A step sounded upon the green sward; the young schoolmaster sprang to his feet. A man stood before him—a gentleman fashionably dressed, a stout, strongly built personage, with a dark countenance; a splendid gold chain glistened upon his waistcoat, a rich diamond glittered on his forefinger; the left hand was bound up at the fleshy part of the thumb. Fernandez looked into the face, and met the full glare of the tigerish eyes. In that moment the two recognised each other.

The tramp who had knelt upon his chest, and with whom he had struggled for his life in the Allonby Woods, stood before Fernandez; and Mapleton saw once more the young, excited face of the man who had fought so bravely and so desperately to save the wounded Sir Guildford. Each knew that the other recognised him. The face of Mapleton grew blood-red, and his eyeballs seemed staring out of their sockets; to say that his countenance looked murderous does not half express the ferocity of his glance. Fernandez simply grew white with surprise, and then another thought made his lip curl with a smile, half of astonishment, half of disdain. Why, here was a gentleman, or one who was supposed to be such, a guest at this lordly mansion



whose dignified repose had so maddened him with its calm air of superiority; here was a gentleman who had stooped to theft, and attempted murder—aye had wandered about as a tramp; how infinitely beneath Fernandez he must be, and yet he was privileged to sit at the same board with Juliette as an equal. He might ride with her, walk with her, she might even lean upon his arm, such a thing was possible.

"You will find," said Mapleton, speaking hoarsely, "that it will be better for you, Mr. Schoolmaster, to make yourself scarce in this neighbourhood. I don't like, and I don't wish to see you, and I generally make it very unpleasant for those I don't like. Can you take a hint?"

"I comprehend your meaning, at least," responded Fernandez, "but I am not going to act upon your orders, as I am not the least alarmed at your threat. I shall remain in this neighbourhood probably for another two years, and, whether you like it or not, I am afraid you will be obliged to see me occasionally, should you remain here. It is difficult to live in a village so small as Allonby without meeting almost every inhabitant nearly every day."

So saying, Fernandez turned upon his heel, and walked off. Mapleton stood scowling, watching him, while he ran lightly up the terrace steps towards the house.

"Either I must kill him or I must ruin his character and have him imprisoned," muttered Mapleton; "one or the other within the month."

Meanwhile, Fernandez was admitted into the mansion, and shown into that little bijou library opening into the conservatory where he had given his former lessons to Miss Random and Lady Juliette.

A step sounded in the conservatory, the rich curtain was pushed aside—another moment, and Juliette entered.

She wore her usual favourite costume of black lace over bright mauve satin. She was dressed for the dinner hour, and wore a magnificent parure of amethysts, a present the day before from the colonel. She carried books under her arm, and these she laid down on the table. She extended her small jewelled hand frankly to Fernandez.

"I have been studying in the conservatory," she said. "Do you know that Miss Random has been attacked with violent neuralgia, so that I shall positively be compelled to take my lesson alone; and Mrs. Philbertson is out driving. I really do not see that we need stand upon ceremony, do you? I really am so anxious to study Spanish just at this time."

She was opening her books whilst she was speaking. Fernandez watched her, with his heart beating so that he could hardly speak. And yet there was no hope for him. Her unconsciousness, her indifference, her very frankness and kindness, all proved that the thought of love as connected with Fernandez was as separate from her soul, as wide asunder as the poles.

She sat down gravely, and opened the books, and the lesson began. She worked so earnestly and with such good will that she heeded not the distraught manner of the preoccupied teacher at her side. She read aloud. He corrected her pronunciation when he remembered to do so; but there were times when, lost in admiration at the perfect profile turned towards him, the small ear, the dulcet sound of the voice, he omitted to check the mistakes of his pupil.

Suddenly she looked up at him with a glance of wonder in the deep blue eyes.

"Why, Mr. Fernandez," she said, "I have pronounced that word in three different ways, and you have not corrected me. Which is the right?"

His face glowed hot with confusion.

Juliette looked perplexed.

"Do you know, I am afraid," she said, "that you have some kind of care or trouble on your mind. If so, don't scruple to tell me if I can be of any use to you."

Fernandez spoke out of the deep passion of his heart.

"Always pitying," he said, "as an angel of mercy!"

Juliette looked at him with surprise—innocent wonder.

"I have never been very kind to you," she said. The unconsciousness of her tone was something inexpressibly painful to Fernandez.

She put down her pencil and looked at him.

"I am sure you have some trouble on your mind," she said. "You know, Mr. Fernandez, you saved my life, and I do not think ingratitude is among my failings. I am quite willing—nay, anxious—to requite you, if possible."

Then Fernandez spoke—spoke in a mystery, as it were; spoke so that Lady Juliette was thoroughly puzzled, and her curiosity completely aroused.

"I have something on my mind, Lady Juliette," said Fernandez; "a trouble which sits heavily on my heart, and overshadows my whole life. I am bound as a bond-slave, denied human rights, tanta-

lised with the possession of a great priceless treasure which I am not permitted to lay hold of!"

He fixed his dark eyes meaningly upon hers as he spoke thus. He searched for an answering gleam, a sympathetic comprehension of the secret which was linked in with both their lives. Juliette only gazed at him with an ever-increasing surprise, unconscious—unconscious of all that he suffered, or feared, or dared to hope for!

Juliette shook her head gravely, and her beautiful eyes drooped.

"You speak in riddles," she said, "completely in riddles. You speak about possessing a treasure which you dare not appropriate to your own use. It reads like some romantic legend, as though some ancestor had left you a chest containing treasure, which you dared not spend until some given time had expired."

"There is no given time in this case," replied Fernandez, with a sorrowful smile. "If I live to the time of hoar hairs—"

"Never, though my mortal summers
To such length of years should run,
As the many-winter'd crow,
Who leads the clanging rookery home,

"never," continued the young man, "can I be allowed to claim that which English laws and human justice would both award me."

Again he looked fixedly at Juliette, passionate fire flamed out of his eyes. She was his wife, great Heaven! his own wife; and she sat there, toying with the pencil, utterly unconscious of the fact, her sweet eyes raised pityingly to his, offering him sympathy and help, if needs were, in his mysterious trouble.

While thus they gazed at each other, the passion-wrought countenance of Fernandez bent towards the pale, spiritual face of Lady Juliette, the door suddenly opened, and there sailed majestically into the room the tall and queenlike form of Florence Random. Her sudden and violent attack of neuralgia had subsided, but it had left her very pale. She was splendidly costumed: she wore bright blue satin, and turquoise ornaments, which set off her fair complexion and magnificent yellow hair. She walked up to the table before which the young couple were seated. One glance at her proud face was enough to startle, nay, electrify Fernandez and Lady Juliette. Neither of them had ever seen this handsome young woman of fashion otherwise than merry, mocking, brilliant, self-possessed, altogether independent, and mistress of the situation, whatever the situation happened to be. Now her large eyes flashed angrily, and concentrated wrath was expressed upon her pale face, a wrath that was almost terrible, and then she spoke:

"Truly, Lady Juliette," she said, "you have not worn your mask of prudery and saint-like purity for nothing, for it has enabled you, a mere girl of seventeen or eighteen, to hoodwink everybody, and to play pranks which I, a woman of seven-and-twenty, dare not enter upon without exciting animadversion. First of all, you run away with your maid to London, and hide, Heaven knows where, for three weeks; you come back again, and are received exactly as though nothing had happened by your kind guardian and Mrs. Philbertson. Your next escapade is still more extraordinary, it strikes me. Here have I been obliged to put off my Spanish lessons during your absence, because Mrs. Philbertson was not good-natured enough to play duenna, and too punctilious to permit me to take my lessons from this village schoolmaster unchaperoned; she has, very justly I think, a dread and dislike of foreigners. But you cast all such considerations to the four winds. Your ladyship, intent on learning, studious as a modern Jane Grey, cannot be kept from the pleasant paths of literature by any conventional considerations. You steal down here with your books, you say nothing to anybody. I feel suddenly relieved from my illness; I call my maid to dress me; I go into the conservatory that I may gather a bouquet." Here the breast of Florence heaved with agitation, she could hardly speak for a moment. "I come to that curtain," she said, pointing to the satin curtain which divided the conservatory from the library, "I hear—not the sounds of Spanish verbs, nor the corrections of false pronunciation, but a sentimental conversation carried on in a low voice between the Lady Juliette Cadette and Mr. Eugene Fernandez, the village schoolmaster. I hear him speak of his misery which binds him for life. I see her look at him with pitying eyes, and tenderly enquire what help or service she can render him. It makes a pretty scene, no doubt," continued the fashionable belle, bitterly, "but it is one that I consider very disgraceful, and the sooner your pretty ladyship is confined to your chamber on a bread and water diet the better. I shall take upon myself to recommend that course to Colonel Philbertson."

A perfect tempest of fury arose in the soul of Fer-

nandez, a terrible look came into his eyes, but by a mighty effort he conquered himself. He looked down upon the rich carpet, so that Florence should not read the emotions that were contending in his heart.

"I have no right to speak," he said, at length. "Miss Random has condescended, with much emphasis and high-bred scorn, to assign me my place. I am, as she remarks justly, only the village schoolmaster; a being too abject, or, rather, one who is in a position too abject," here he raised his eyes, and flashed a splendid defiance at Miss Random, "in a position too abject," continued Fernandez, laying a stress upon the word position, "to dare to express an opinion either one way or the other. As a human being, I am, of course, Miss Random, your equal in every respect."

There was a concentrated calm, a superb insolence in the young man's manner. Miss Random looked at him; admiration, anger, astonishment were expressed upon her fine countenance.

Then Juliette spoke; Juliette, always so calm, so quiet, and so wise; Juliette, so passionless, and so peculiar, who never seemed to have acted with impulse in all her life, save on that one occasion, when she had bound herself for the whole term of her mortal existence to a stranger whom she hoped never to see again; but she had done this in the same spirit in which she would have taken the veil, and devoted herself to a nun's life of seclusion and purity.

"I am very sorry, Florence," she said, "that I have acted so very thoughtlessly, and drawn down reproaches upon Mr. Fernandez; reproaches and unkindness," she added, after a pause, "for indeed I alone merit your hard speeches, not my teacher; still, it must never occur again. I must not take lessons unchaperoned; I was very thoughtless. Can I say more?"

Fernandez, white as marble, with eyes flashing, lip drawn, head lowered, glared quite savagely at Miss Random.

She started as she met his angry gaze, yet he said nothing; he only bowed deeply to both the ladies, and hastened from the room into the hall, and out into the park.

Fernandez lowered his hat upon his brow, and went along the park, looking moodily at the ground; he felt that he was dismissed from Maberly, dismissed by that insolent and imperious Miss Random, who had hitherto patronised him. The insults of the capricious woman of fashion were, according to his idea, of no more importance than her condescension or her kindness. No idea of the real motives which actuated Florence entered into the mind of the young man who was so enamoured of Juliette; but he was desperately enraged and embittered because he felt that he was separated from the idol of his thought. Some wild hopes had taken root in his heart during those few moments when Juliette had looked at him pityingly, and so kindly. Perhaps, if he had more opportunities of meeting with her, a bond might be established between them, which, in time, might strengthen and brighten into a golden chain of love: it was a mad idea, perhaps, yet, still, there it was; and now Florence Random had stepped between them, like some avenging angel, with a flaming sword, driving him from the paradise—the earthly paradise of Maberly.

"Capricious demon," said Fernandez, fiercely, to himself.

And he never thought of adding the words "beautiful demon," or "fascinating fiend," or any other absurd and contradictory terms in which a man is sometimes apt to apostrophise a woman who is at once cruel and handsome. In his eyes Miss Random was not handsome—that is to say, he had only a general impression of satins and jewels, golden tresses, pink and white complexion, colour, glitter, splendour, and grace all embodied in one majestic female, who was to him no more interesting than a fashion-plate.

He reached Honoursnuckle Cottage in the dusk of the evening, and asked his kind landlady to let him have his tea. His lamp was lighted, and his tea was brought into the little parlour. A sort of despair, a wild, reckless, desperate feeling, took hold of Fernandez, and possessed him like an evil influence; his cheeks glowed, his eyes sparkled. Shut in his little room, with his tea-urn and his lighted lamp, his books strewn about the small sofa and shelves, his canvases, with a half-finished likeness of Lady Juliette standing on the easel in one corner, the handsome artist and teacher of languages paced up and down his small apartment like a young lion raging in his den.

"Why," said he, speaking aloud, "why, in the name of Heaven and earth, have I submitted to the tyranny of fate, which comes to me in the form of the Rev. Joseph Upperton, so long and so patiently? Here am I, condemned to toil for hours daily, for a pittance which barely suffices to find me in tasteless

food and shabby clothing. I have no associates, no recreations; I am shut out even from study, for I can obtain access to but few books in this out-of-the-way place; besides, let me tell the truth, I have no heart for study. I am in love—reckless, and miserable. I am bound down here for another two years, but I won't stay. True, he tells me that he will either prosecute me or send a bad name after me in such a way that I shall be unable to earn my bread. Well! I will go abroad, I will throw myself into the ranks of battle. I may as well serve for a target for a chasseur as crouch under the heel of this detested Vicar of Allonby. I am constitutionally unfit for the kind of existence I lead here. Let me cast up my accounts and see how much I owe, and how much remains to me."

He took down an inkstand, drew a sheet of paper from a portfolio, and hastily cast up his accounts. He owed five pounds for rent, two pounds at his butcher's, and thirty shillings at his grocer's. There was a bill, too, owing to the tailor in the next town. Taking one thing with another, Eugene Fernandez owed about fifteen pounds in the world. It was near the September quarter, and in a few days he would receive money which would enable him to leave Allonby with honour, so far as the clearance of debt was concerned, and there would remain a surplus, which, added to the money he had received from Florence for the Spanish lessons, would constitute a capital of some seven pounds ten. It was not much to begin the world with, it was true; but Fernandez was in a wild and reckless mood that night, and he told himself that if he could once escape from the trammels of Joseph Upperton, Vicar, he should breathe more freely.

"As for Juliette," here he clasped his hands tightly together, frowned, and looked down thoughtfully upon the ground; "as for Juliette," muttered he, "she is mine, and she is not mine. She will scarcely wed with another! No, no, no! If I heard of that I would come back from the farthest end of the world, and tear her from him even before the altar. Still I must not exert my claim. She will tread the earth calmly as a saint; I shall rush headlong from one end of it to the other, and men will probably deem me a hardened sinner. We shall be separate, separate, separate! Meanwhile, I won't pass my evening here with my books, my lamp, and my teapot, as though I were a lady governess in a genteel family, or a studious curate, like Mr. Clenham. I would I were in mighty London, or wicked and beautiful Paris. I want lights and music and wine and games of chance; voices of singing men and women; the applause shouts of delighted audiences; flaring gas and graceful actresses—life, life, life! such as one meets with in the gay cities of the world; not the droning, mooning companionship of tillers of the soil, hewers of wood, and drawers of water. I know not how I have existed so long in this stupid, sordid village of Allonby."

He buttoned himself into his great-coat while he was speaking, for the night was chilly. He drew a low-crowned hat over his eyes, and then calling out to his landlady that he had taken the latch-key, he called forth, and was soon wending his way towards the lower portion of the village. The night was dark, but a little way ahead of Fernandez gleamed bright gas jets, in the bar window of a tavern known as the "Three Oaks." Here farmers and labourers were privileged to intoxicate themselves with strong ale and cider, fiery brandy, whisky, and gin, either in the tap-room or the more elegant bar-parlour.

Now Eugene Fernandez had never entered the "Three Oaks" in his life. As he approached, he heard the sounds of uproarious merriment. He went on hastily, and entered the tavern. If he could not enjoy the dissipations of those fair cities, which he had apostrophised as mighty London and beautiful, wicked Paris, at least he would plunge headforemost into such common-place and clumsy recreations as were afforded by that village tavern, the "Three Oaks." Alas, for poor Fernandez!

CHAPTER XXII.

Firmly then and more firmly yet,
With scorn for scorn and with threat for threat,
The proud one confronted the cruel. *Thomas Hood.*

"FLORENCE, why have you been so unkind to me?" inquired Lady Juliette.

Dinner was over, and the two young ladies were standing out upon a balcony, looking into the garden.

"I was unkind to you for your good," replied Florence. "I consider that young man, Mr. Fernandez, a very improper person, that is to say, improper to introduce into a house as instructor of beautiful young ladies. He is too handsome, too presumptuous, too insolent. I have conceived a very great dislike and distrust for him, I can assure you."

Juliette leaned her beautiful arms upon the balcony, and looked musingly upon the rich flowering shrubs

which twined their fragrant boughs in and out among the fine ironwork.

"I think you are rather unjust," said Juliette, after a pause. "For my part, I rather take an interest in the schoolmaster."

"You need not tell me that," cried Florence, with a bitter little laugh. "Do you know, Lady Juliette Cadette, that you are on the high road to fall passionately in love with this miserable adventurer? He is handsome, and tall, and strong. Why, in the name of pity, do you not persuade the colonel to engage him as footman? He would look remarkably well in the crimson and gold livery of the Philbertson's, and if once you saw him handing about the vegetable dishes, and drawing the corks from the wine bottles, all your dreams of romance would fade into smoke."

"Florence, you are very bitter," returned Juliette; "but since you persist in seeing things in this absurd light, we will, of course, discontinue the lessons. As to my falling in love with anybody, banish the thought from your mind. I am going to remain always unwed. The doctors say now that the bullet which injured poor Sir Guildford will cause him to be bent nearly double for the rest of his life, should he ever rise again from his bed, which is not at all likely. I would have done anything rather than marry him. But now that fear is removed, completely removed," she added, speaking in a tone of relief, "and I assure you I am as truly vowed to celibacy as if I had taken a nun's veil."

Juliette spoke with such emphasis that Florence stared at her with some surprise.

"Any one would think you had secretly entered some religious order, little one," she said. "But please to remember that although you would never be so mad as to dream of marrying the village schoolmaster, you might still encourage him in ridiculous hopes; you might get yourself talked about; you might, in short—"

Here Florence paused, she hardly knew how to continue her lecture.

At this moment came the sound of voices in the drawing-room. Colonel Philbertson and Mr. Mapleton had left their wine, and were now seeking the society of the ladies.

Florence, eager upon all occasions to escape the society of Mapleton, hastily pleaded a return of neuralgic pains in her head, and retired to her own apartment.

Juliette remained with Mrs. Philbertson while the footmen were handing about the coffee and confectionery.

Suddenly one of the footmen announced the Reverend Joseph Upperton. Another moment and the pompous vicar had entered the drawing-room.

"I have to apologise for being such a late visitor, Colonel Philbertson," said the vicar. "But—"

Here he glanced at Mapleton.

There was nobody to remark or comment upon that glance since the shrewd Miss Random had retired, but it was certainly a glance fraught with meaning.

The vicar accepted some coffee, and humbly paid his respects to the haughty Mrs. Philbertson. But all the while Mapleton watched him with uneasy glances. At length the ex-tramp started to his feet.

"I want to consult you, Mr. Upperton," he said.

"You have good taste, I believe, in church windows, and I am going to put in some painted windows to a fine old house of mine in Scotland. You said you would show me some designs, but I rather want your opinion on some of my own. Perhaps you would not mind walking into the library."

And the vicar and Mapleton left the room.

In the library the gas was burning, and a fire had been lighted, since the evening had been rather chilly. Mapleton took the precaution to lock the door before he opened his mind to the vicar.

"You got my note?" asked the ex-tramp, "and thank you very much for coming so punctually, Mr. Upperton. I may as well say at once though that stained-glass windows have nothing whatever to do with my sending for you here this evening. I had a long conversation with you you know, the other day, Mr. Upperton, and I came to the conclusion that you were a sensible man—one who would not suffer fine notions to stand seriously in the way of your interests."

The vicar coughed and smiled hypocritically.

"I always wish to do my duty, Mr. Mapleton," he began.

The ex-tramp interrupted him, brutally.

"No, you don't," he said; "that's all very fine. You can talk that way if you like to the curate, but it does not do for me. Let duty go and hang itself if it likes. Let me tell you that Colonel Philbertson and myself are as one, our interests are the same; I have but to speak, and straightway he does as I desire. Colonel Philbertson has a great deal of power, his interest is so great in certain quarters that church preferments come easily to his

hand. I could make you a dean, with an income of six thousand a year, in place of your six hundred, in less than six months, if I chose, and I will choose if you will only oblige me."

The vicar's eyes twinkled, and he rubbed his fat hands together slowly. The six thousand pounds glittered as a wall of gold before his imagination. What would not the vicar have done to have earned that princely revenue?

"You have only to speak, sir," he said.

"Well, look here," cried Mapleton, "let us come to the point at once. You have a fellow in the village, a schoolmaster; I have reason to dislike and detest him, no matter why; I met him abroad some time ago. I believe he is dishonourable, dishonest. I want to have him sent out of the village, I want to have a bad name sent after him, I want to have him disgraced and incapacitated from ever holding up his head again amongst his fellows. All this sounds very terrible, but I am a man of a strong will, and I want it done."

The vicar rubbed his fat hands together once more.

There was a sort of power in Mapleton, an energetic fashion of bringing things before his hearers, and presenting them in a graphic and forcible light, which perfectly astounded, while it completely convinced the vicar. He knew that Colonel Philbertson was a man of wide influence both in Court and in camp; he believed that Mapleton was, as he stated he was, the bosom friend of the proud colonel, he had faith then in the promise of Mapleton, and he believed that the six thousand a year, and the dean's hat, were boons which he might win for himself, if he strove to please the colonel's friend; so the vicar rubbed his fat hands together, smiled down at his polished leather boots, and then looking up at Mapleton said, bluntly:

"When do you wish this done?"

"At once," replied Mapleton, "at once."

"But I must have a clue to go upon," said the vicar.

"Is there not enough?" cried Mapleton, "in this last affair of the robbery, and the attempt to murder Sir Guildford Owen? Has the watch or the money been discovered? Then the tramp, whom he describes so graphically, has anybody seen him? Depend upon it, the young ruffian is the culprit in this case. But I know the difficulty of bringing home the evidence; it is almost impossible," added Mapleton, hastily; "therefore, I should only use those suspicions as an excuse. Can't you watch, and bring home some other charge?"

The vicar rubbed his hands more slowly than before, and looked down again at his polished boots. A very ugly smile was on his lips.

"I have had great cause to be dissatisfied with this young man lately," he said; "and I shall only be acting from a sense of duty in doing as you propose."

Mapleton interrupted him with a coarse laugh.

"Sense of duty, my good old fellow," he cried; "that may do very well in the pulpit, but it won't do with me. Tell the truth, that you do it from the sense of money, sense of the value of six thousand a year. Let us shake hands on it, for it is a bargain. And now let us hasten back to the drawing-room and the ladies. You must take a glass of wine, and talk a little about stained-glass windows in the drawing-room before you leave."

The vicar followed Mapleton to the drawing-room. There he talked about stained windows, drank his glass of wine, and afterwards he took his departure.

It was a fine night, but Mr. Upperton had driven over in his carriage; he was a pompous man, and disliked going on foot. Surely, the Fates were against Fernandez on this evening.

When the carriage entered Allonby it became evident that something was the matter with the wheel, and just as the vehicle arrived opposite to the "Three Oaks," the wheel came off, and the vicar was forced to alight. Naturally he walked into the inn; naturally he walked into the bar-parlour. A small, cheerful fire burnt there; the sound of song and laughter, and the jingling of glasses greeted his ears; and there, surrounded by some of the convivial spirits of the country side, certain rakish young farmers, who thought more of attending steeplechases, betting, driving about in smart traps, or scouring the country on high-bred horses (which they had not the means to pay for)—young men whom mothers of growing-up daughters dreaded to see enter their homesteads, young men who drank, gambled, and sowed their wild oats generally all over the country-side, at once to their own delight and disgrace—surrounded, we repeat, by these choice spirits, sat Fernandez, the supposed studious recluse. He had just commenced the relation of some story of adventure that had befallen him in the mountains of Spain.

The vicar paused in horror, for the young man related the tale in a fiery spirit, and with wild energy.

The vicar stood aghast behind the shadow of the door. Everybody, even the landlady and the barmaid, were so intent upon the history that nobody noticed the appearance of the vicar, half-crouching behind the doorway.

The story came to a close; the young farmers clapped their hands and applauded with uproar. They ordered in another bowl of brandy punch, and one of them said, turning to Eugene:

"Mind you come over to Laylands to-morrow; that's my home. I've no one to say me nay; I am master there. No father, no mother, no wife. We can drink and smoke till all is blue or any other colour you like to name! My good fellow, I wish I had known you before."

The speaker was a very reckless, very good-natured young bachelor, who was going fast on the short but exciting journey to the dogs. He was tall and handsome, and ruddy of aspect. His name was Jack Layland, and his farm was called after himself. Then the vicar stepped forward, and stood in the midst of the riotous little assembly like a death's-head at the wine-table.

"Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Fernandez," said the vicar, in a sepulchral tone.

Eugene had drunk some of the brandy punch; he was not in the slightest degree intoxicated, but he was excited, exhilarated, his fiery spirit was awakened and alert. He had made up his mind, it will be remembered, to leave the vicar without notice, and he was exactly in the humour to defy conventionalisms—nay, to defy the vicar himself if need were.

"Mr. Upperton, Mr. Upperton, Mr. Upperton," said Fernandez, mimicking the solemn tone of the vicar, and addressing the reverend gentleman in the same admonitory tone of reproof which had been used to wards himself.

There was a pause and a hush in the bar-parlour. Everybody was astounded; the vicar was perfectly overwhelmed.

"Insolent and audacious profligate!" said the vicar, "circumstances of your past career have this day come to my knowledge. I did not, indeed, purpose to have told you all in the presence of your boon companions. But understand that your character is at stake; and though permitted to go free, you will be placed under the surveillance of the police for your connection with the attempted murder and daring robbery of Sir Guildford Owen. You shall never enter the schoolroom again. The money that is coming to you will all be monopolised in paying your debts. The surplus I shall reserve towards the money which you owe me, for you have not painted all the pictures which I required of you. You will go out penniless and characterless." Here the vicar raised his fat forefinger and pointed at the schoolmaster, "and you will be watched on all sides; so that at the first ship you will be cast into prison. You are ruined for life, young man, you are ruined for life."

All the pent-up fury which Fernandez had nursed for months against the tyrant vicar arose in raging flames at this insult. He sprang to his feet; teeth and hands clenched, and eyes sparkling with fire.

(To be continued.)

ELECTION APPETITES.—In the *Food Journal* for September we find a paper on election dinners in the olden times. The following is an extract which our contemporary gives from Harrington's diary of the meals made in these exciting times in 1660 and 1761. Here is the bill for an election dinner in 1660:—

For bread, ale, and tobacco . . .	£1 17 6
Sturgeon and butter . . .	1 2 0
Anchovies and oysters . . .	0 14 1
Eight dozen bottles of canary . . .	10 12 0
Two dozen of claret . . .	1 2 0
Neats' tongues . . .	0 6 2

£15 13 9

There was not much to be grumbled at here; but what shall we say of the voters of a very small borough, in 1761, exactly a hundred years later, who ate on the day of election, independently of slight refectations of veal, mutton, poultry, and pastry, a preparatory breakfast, which cost the candidate 750*l*.? Afterwards they dined, and the poor starved fellows demolished 780 stone of beef, 315 dozen of wine, 72 pipes of ale, and 365 gallons of spirits for punch!

THE ABDICATION OF NAPOLEON I.—On the 22nd of June, 1815, Napoleon, who had fled to Paris from the field of Waterloo, published a "Declaration to the French People." "My political life," he said, "is terminated, and I proclaim my son, under the title of Napoleon II., Emperor of the French. The present Ministers will provisionally form the council of the Government. The interest which I take in my son induces me to invite the Chambers to form,

without delay, the Regency by a law. Unite all for the public safety; that you may continue an independent nation." This declaration was conveyed to both the Chambers, and in accordance with its spirit, deputations were sent to wait upon the Emperor, and to accept his resignation. A committee of five members, three from the representatives, and two from the peers, was voted as a provisional Government, under the authority of which the existing Ministers were to continue their respective functions. The representatives elected Carnot, Fouché, and Grenier; the peers the Duc de Vicenza and Baron Quinette. All mention of the nomination by the Emperor of his son as Napoleon II. was carefully avoided in the debates. Meantime the allied armies were advancing upon Paris.

SCIENCE.

STANLEY ELECTRIC DISK.—The science of electricity is one of the most promising to study. Almost every person who has studied it deeply has made discoveries which have proved beneficial to man. By its aid the baser metals are coated with gold and silver, works of art are produced, and our taste refined. The telegraph is becoming our universal messenger. The lighthouses are illuminated by electricity. By a knowledge of its nature we protect our ships and buildings from the dire effects of electric clouds. Electricity is the source of heat, force, light, and magnetism; what we now know about it is sufficient to teach us how very much more there is yet to learn of this subtle agent.

IMPROVEMENTS IN PHOTOGRAPHY.—M. Bazin lately made a communication to the Photographic Society of France, respecting a process for diminishing by one third the time of exposure in the camera, whatever may have been the formula by which the negative was executed. This process consists in augmenting the power of the light on the collodionised plate by additional red rays, independent of the light passing through the objective. This red light is admitted into the camera by making in the four corners of the front, circular openings, which are closed by means of glasses, coloured red with carmine dissolved in ammonia. These glasses should, besides, be rendered double by means of a ground glass, so placed as to diffuse the luminous rays, the red light striking upon the sensitive layer at the same time that the image is produced by the objective. Under the influence of this red light—the intensity of which should be regulated according to the opening of the diaphragm of the lens, and according to an exposure which should be one-third less than is necessary for obtaining a good negative by the ordinary processes—the developer causes the darker part of the image to come out perfectly, diminishes the crudity of the high lights, and gives much harmony to the picture. The same effect is produced by submitting the sensitive plate to the red light, whether before or after the exposure, but the result is not so good. The other rays have been tried, but the red ray is the only one that has produced satisfactory effects. In support of this communication, M. Bazin showed double proofs made from negatives taken in precisely the same time. That obtained with the addition of the red light gave much more of the details in the very black or dark green parts, with more softness in the light parts, while the proof obtained in the ordinary way presented in the former parts absolute blacks.

WELSH AND NORTH-COUNTRY COAL.—The full reports of the experimental trials of coal in the last twelve months on board her Majesty's ships *Lucifer* and *Urgent* at Portsmouth have been issued, with explanatory sketches and tables. The *Urgent* has two sets of boilers, each with an independent funnel, affording an opportunity of comparing and testing the old and new forms of furnace; the new, or smoke-consuming furnace, differing from the old mainly in being fitted with a hanging door below the bridge at the back of the furnace, on which is fitted a gridiron slide for varying the quantity of atmospheric air admitted into the combustion chamber from the ash-pit for the purpose of producing combustion of the products of combustion. The trials with improved furnaces demonstrate that with Welsh and North-country coal mixed in equal quantities there is nearly the same amount of smoke as with best Welsh coal in ordinary furnaces; there is a saving of fuel of 14·33 per cent., with an increase of power of 7·56 per cent., giving a gain of 22·39 per cent.; there is less ash by 21·15 per cent.; less soot by 52·21 per cent., thus enabling a vessel to run double the time without cleaning the tubes; less clinker by 23·64 per cent., thus allowing the fires to work longer without cleaning. A comparison of coals shows that by using all Welsh coal fresh worked there is a saving of 4 per cent. as compared with mixed, used in the same furnaces; but there is an increase of ash by 10·63 per cent.;

there is less soot with mixed coal by 35·33 per cent. than with Welsh; there is less clinker with all Welsh by 15·49 per cent. Thus, there is an apparent small saving in using all Welsh coal, if it is fresh worked and of the best quality; but the other advantages given by the mixed coal—i.e., so much less soot (which is a most important item to steam vessels) and less ash—more than compensate for the small saving shown in using all Welsh; but the great saving in using the mixed coal will be more fully developed on foreign service, as the Welsh coal disintegrates very much, and requires a large mixture of the best Hartley coals to consume the small. If boilers were constructed with larger combustion chambers (which can be done without any increase of cost in all new boilers) in the furnaces fitted on this principle there is no doubt but mixed coal would give considerably greater benefits than have been shown in these trials.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE EARTH CIRCUIT.

It was at one time imagined that the earth completed the circuit precisely in the same manner as a return wire; this opinion is now considered incorrect. Gavarret explains the action thus:

"The poles of a battery, when disconnected, have equal and contrary tensions.

"When insulated conductors are placed in contact with them, they themselves become the poles of the battery, the battery having furnished a current sufficient to charge them, but not of sufficient duration to move a galvanometer needle.

"If the conductors are enlarged, the time occupied in charging them will increase, until, as they are still further enlarged, a limit will be reached at which the flow of electricity into them will last long enough to affect the galvanometer; and when the conductors become infinitely long or infinitely large, the time occupied in charging them also becomes infinite, or, in other words, the current will pass precisely as if the poles were connected.

"Thus, when the extremities of a circuit are connected to the earth, which is an infinitely large conductor, their respective tensions are diffused in all directions without producing any appreciable tension in the earth itself, so that the current will continue to flow.

"The earth acts as an ordinary conductor and opposes some resistance to this diffusion."

Another view is that, whenever one kind of electricity is produced, an equal quantity of the opposite is also produced; and, as both these tensions are ultimately transferred to the earth, its tension remains unaltered, the opposite tensions neutralising one another through the earth's conductivity.

When a layer of soil placed in a box is compared with a similar layer forming part of the earth's surface, it is found that the isolated portion offers the greater resistance. Its resistance follows the same laws as that of any other substance, depending on its dryness or dampness, its nature, and its length and section.

MESSERS. ROTHSCHILD BROTHERS have had to formally deny a persistent statement in the *Journal de Paris* that they have any share or interest in the London Times.

WRECKS.—The "Analysis of Wrecks and Casualties" annually issued by the Statistical Committee of Lloyd's has just appeared. It refers to the year 1869, and embraces a mass of detail, the collecting and arrangement of which reflect the highest credit on the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry Jevons. It appears from the tables that the number of casualties posted in Lloyd's Loss Book last year was 2,986, as compared with 2,801 in 1868. The total losses were 2,006, of which 1,877 were ships, and 129 steamers, against an average of 2,162 in the previous years; and the "constructive" losses numbered 156, against an average of 270. These figures show that, notwithstanding the large increase in the mercantile marine of all nations, the proportion of the more serious class of casualties has decidedly diminished. Taking the results to cargoes, we find that in 1869 there were 971 totally lost, against an average of 1,270 in the three previous years; 568 part lost, against an average of 612; and 6 "all saved," against an average of 50. Salvage services were rendered in 1,157 cases, as compared with an average of 1,278 in the three previous years. The list of crews saved numbered 1,123, against an average of 714; and the lives lost, so far as reported, were 1,643, against an average of 1,703 in the three previous years. The returns show that by far the largest proportion of casualties is in the British islands, the total losses in this division numbering, last year, 431; the next in magnitude was the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Sea of Azof division, the total here being 198; while the smallest were the Californian coast, and Cape Horn to River Plate, the reported losses in which regions were 1 each. The vessels raised after sinking were, last year, 37 in number, against an average of 45 in the three previous years.



[A RECOGNITION.]

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER IV.

The way is hard, far to be gone,
And very crooked are the paths
That you must find out all alone.

Percy Reliques.

He of whom the landlord of the "Iron Hand" spoke, as recorded in our last chapter, was a man of powerful frame, sitting in his saddle with the ease and grace of a practised rider, and, far from looking like a man of peaceful calling, appeared to be a resolute and experienced soldier, both in garb and manner.

He rode straight up to the steps of the inn, at the same swift, easy gallop he was using when Schwartz first saw him, and drew rein abruptly, the hoofs of his large gray steed striking up clouds of earth at the very base of the stone stairs.

One of these clouds, shot up by the suddenly stopped steed, struck Schwartz in the beard, stinging his cheek sharply, and causing him to snap out a fierce malediction against the rider.

The latter, a man perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a dark, sun-browned face, resolute, and heavily bearded, with a pair of bold, eagle-like eyes lighting up remarkably his handsome aquiline features, fixed his gaze upon Ulgitha, who shrank somewhat from view in the doorway.

From Ulgitha the stranger glanced at Schwartz, with that startled air which one shows on being surprised.

"My faith!" exclaimed the stranger, in a deep, rich voice, flashing his keen eyes over the whole front of the building. "I have been here before—but in the night."

"Pardon, your worship," whined Ulgitha, for the surly Schwartz was dumb with the terror that had fallen upon him. "We have lived here many years, and never before have we had the honour of seeing your worship. Will it please you to come in?"

"It was night," said the horseman, not aloud, and not heeding Ulgitha's words, but gazing sharply around, "and it was five years ago. A black and stormy night—I had lost my way in escaping from a band of thieves—I came this way, floundering through the darkness and storm; yes, there is the giant hand thrust from over the door. These two came out with torches, and craved me to dismount. I remember I liked not their looks, and when they saw I wished to ride away they tried to drag me from my horse, and that hag struck at my groin with a knife, and

wounded me in the thigh. And that red-bearded knave dealt me a blow in my ribs with a dirk. But for my coat of mail that stab would have made an end of me. 'Twas a murderous attack, and a narrow escape. Saint Paul! how madly did I ride all that night! Ah, this is the inn I was warned to shun—the 'Iron Hand' inn. Again have I wandered from the main road."

These thoughts passed through his brain in an instant, and then he said, in a hearty tone, as one ready to correct a mistake:

"You are right, my good woman. I have never been here before. But it is much like a place where I was assailed some years ago. I have lost my way, in my haste to reach Sparburg, where I am to meet my wife and son. I should have been there three weeks ago or more. Heaven grant my wife may not have grown impatient, and set out to find me in Zweibrudden, where I lay desperately ill so long. The times are troublous and the roads perilous."

Most of this he said to himself, as if ill at ease in mind; while Schwartz and Ulgitha, felting indifference, secretly trembled lest the son of the horseman might suddenly appear, and so overturn all their plans.

"I wish to reach the main road to Sparburg," said the stranger, after a pause.

"We give nothing for nothing," growled Schwartz. "Pay me well, and I'll be your guide."

"I'd rather take the Evil One for a guide to Heaven than you for a companion," said the horseman, in a tone of scorn, as he turned his steed and spurred away.

"Ho! ho!" chuckled the innkeeper, glaring after him and grinning. "I knew that would send him off in haste, Ulgitha. He has recognised us as those who failed to make an end of him five years ago. Had I not seen that in his face I would have tried to persuade him to stay, and have let him meet the wife he may never see again. But to manage our affairs then, we must have called in aid from the rovers of the forest, and there'd have been too many to share. I thought of getting near him and knocking him off his horse, for doubtless he carries that with him which would set us up for life; but he has a hand like the paw of a lion, and I have not forgotten the blow he gave me five years ago. There was a blaze of fire in his eye, too, that warned me to keep well out of his reach, for he had recognised me."

"But now our designs on the woman are made dangerous," said Ulgitha. "He will, in the end, trace her to this inn.—Ah, whither are you going?" Schwartz had descended the steps as she spoke,

and in reply said, pointing after the fast galloping horseman:

"Do you see? He knows not whither he goes. He has taken a course that will lead him straight into the forest. The sun has set; it will soon be dark. I know the man well—or did, by repute, years ago, in Prague. He fears nothing. Why should he? since he has in his single arm the strength of three strong men; and there's no sword-player in all Germany that can keep a blade in hand against him, nor a tumbler on the green so active. Here, come close, lest what we say goes to other ears."

Ulgitha, with a stealthy glance back into the great hall of the inn, hurried down the steps and stood near her husband, whose evil face was all aglow with eager wickedness.

"See! He is sharp upon the forest road, the very worst he could have chosen," he said, whispering even at that distance from the house, and even glancing back at its dismantled front, as if he feared to see the intelligent face of the horseman's son peering out from some ruined window. "See, that road will lead him miles and miles astray. Darkness will speedily overtake him, and he will halt for the night bewildered. In the morning he will try to retrace his steps. Do you see to the woman; I will see to the husband."

So saying, the innkeeper, to whom all the secret avenues of the great forest were as familiar as the empty halls of his inn, darted away, and in a moment was lost to the view of Ulgitha; his tall, ungainly figure vanishing in a deep and densely wooded ravine, into which he suddenly plunged.

Ulgitha gazed after the rider, who soon was hidden from her sight, and then hastened into the house to prepare food for those whose ill fortune had guided them to the shelter of the "Iron Hand" inn.

The next morning found Louise Van De Veer too feeble to rise from her bed, and though in no pain, she was oppressed by a weight of weakness in her limbs which she could not overcome.

Ulgitha, skilled in brewing decoctions from poisonous herbs, had given the poor lady that in her drink which had acted upon the joints, and, to her alarm and amazement, Louise Van De Veer found herself scarcely able to raise her hand to her head.

It would not have been an unpleasant sensation had her mind been at ease, for a feeling of luxurious languor pervaded her body, from which all sense of pain seemed to have fled.

"Are you strong enough to go on, dear mother?" asked Ernest, when he awoke on that morning, after sleeping all night on the little cot Ulgitha had prepared for him near the bed of his mother.

It was then that she made the discovery that she was unable to rise, and after a vain attempt to do so, she replied:

"Alas! no, my son. I seem to have lost all my strength. And I was so strong yesterday morning, and all day, until wearied by our lonely, wandering ride. Ah, what a pity we strayed from the main road! My fault too, Ernest, for you favoured the way we did not take."

Ulgitha, who had arisen at an early hour, and who had for a long time been crouching and listening at the door, in hope of hearing something that might be turned to her advantage, finding that her guests spoke in French, of which she knew nothing, now tapped at the door, and came in.

"Good Ulgitha," said the lady, "I must continue to be your sick guest, I see."

She assumed a confidence she was far from feeling, for her heart shuddered at the very presence of the evil-eyed woman. A dread of Ulgitha and the inn itself, for which she could not account, pressed painfully upon her mind, and though a gentle smile played around her lips as she thus greeted the yellow-haired, rat-eyed woman, she grew really sick with fear at sight of her.

Ernest, less experienced in hiding his true emotions, glided from his cot, and, placing himself near his mother, fixed his dark, intelligent eyes steadily and suspiciously upon Ulgitha.

"Why," said Ulgitha, staring at the boy, "you slept without undressing!"

"Yes, because I hoped we were to make an early start this morning."

"And with the saddle for a pillow," said Ulgitha, glancing at the cot.

"Yes, so that I might dream of riding on our way to meet father."

"And did not even touch the nice posset I made for you," continued Ulgitha, with a sharp glance at a full pewter tankard on the table.

"Yes, I touched it. I tasted it. I did not like it. It tasted of herbs."

"Little gentlemen are often hard to please," said Ulgitha, with a sigh.

"But mine was excellent, and I drank it all," Louise Van De Veer hastened to say, and smiling.

"Very good, very good, my lady. I am sure you are some great lady, though you have not told me so."

"No, no, my good woman. I am no great lady. I am only the wife of a city merchant, on my way to meet my husband, or rather to find him, for I heard he was very ill at Zweibrücken. We had appointed to meet him at Spargburg, and waited there nearly a month. By chance I learned that he had been overtaken with fever and sickness at Zweibrücken, and forthwith we set out to go to him. There were five of us in all—"

"Five!" interrupted Ulgitha.

"Yes—myself and Ernest, Janet and Bertha, my two women, and Anselm, our guide. Early yesterday morning, even in the main road, we were attacked by a band of horsemen. They led us far into the forest, and there plundered us of all we had—and were very angry at finding so little, for they had expected a great booty in diamonds and gems, having made the attack because they thought me the wife of a diamond merchant—"

"Which you are not?" interrupted Ulgitha.

Louise Van De Veer gazed steadily at the woman for an instant, and then said, frankly:

"I am the wife of a diamond merchant, my good woman, and though I have not now that with me to pay you as you may desire to be paid for your care of me, my husband will fill your hands with broad pieces of gold if you see me well through my troubles."

"There!" thought Ulgitha as she flew about the room, arranging and pretending to arrange this and that. "After all it may be true that honesty is the best policy! Had we said plumply to the horseman last evening, 'Come in, come in! here are your wife and son!' he would have made us rich. No, he would have remembered how we tried to murder and rob him five years ago; and, taking away his wife and son, bid us be hanged for our pains! Oh, the fact is, it is far too late in the day for Ulgitha and Rudolph Schwartz to try to make a farthing honestly. It's foolish to cry over spilled milk. By this time, perhaps, the diamond merchant is well buried somewhere in the Giant Forest, and Rudolph is on the way home with pockets lined with gold and gems. Come, after all, I think, if Rudolph does not miss his game, this will pay better than being honest."

"Oh, the vile robbers, my lady!" she added, aloud; "it is a wonder they left you alive, and a still greater wonder that they let you keep the mule. Of course the saddle is worth nothing," she said, with a scornful glance at that sorry-looking article; "but my good man, who has an eye for such things, says the mule is a very valuable one. It is a miracle that they left you that."

"Perhaps they were not such good judges, Ulgitha; and indeed that mule was the poorest-looking animal we had, the others being excellent horses. But I rode upon the mule, as his pace was sure and easy; my darling boy here on a pretty pony at my side."

"I wonder the wife of a merchant, and especially of a diamond merchant, rode in so sorry a saddle," said Ulgitha, tossing the saddle from the cot.

The lady and the boy exchanged glances unseen by Ulgitha, and the former said, quickly:

"It is a very easy riding saddle, for all it is so soiled, old, and tattered—so soft that you see Ernest preferred it to one of your pillows—"

"As the pillow does not smell very fresh," added the boy, quickly, as eager as his mother to divert suspicion from the all-important and diamond-hiding saddle.

"Our young master is very hard to please," sighed Ulgitha, restraining with an effort a display of her rage on hearing the sweetness of her pillows disparaged. "The pillow we may soon give you, my young hawk," she thought, "will not be so sweet as that you tossed away."

"But, lady," she continued, aloud, "did the robbers take all you had? And what became of your attendants?"

"The robbers led us far into the forest," replied the lady, "and after finding very little money and no gems, bound our guide, Anselm, to a tree, and hallooed him nearly to death. Then we learned that Anselm had been a traitor to us, he having given such information to the robbers as led them to imperil their lives by attacking us on the main road. Not finding the booty he had led them to expect, they vented their brutal rage upon him. It was fortunate for us that they did so, or their disappointment might have caused them to wreak their vengeance upon me and my son."

"But the two women you spoke of?" asked Ulgitha, eager to learn if there was a chance that those women might trace their mistress to the "Iron Hand" inn.

"Heaven help them!" exclaimed the lady, in bitter sorrow. "The robbers carried them away, with our horses and all our luggage. They spared my life, and left me the mule on which we came hither. Had I not been as I am, they would have carried me also to their dreadful forest haunts. But my dear son begged so hard that his tears and prayers moved the leader of the band to pity. At his command one of his men led our mule, we being upon it, to a spot whence we could see the main road. But after reaching it we strayed from it, coming upon a place where several roads crossed each other. It was noon when we became lost, and after that we wandered here and there until we halted last evening before your door."

"Do you think they killed the guide, lady?"

"When last I saw him he was still bound to the tree, and some of the robbers said he was dead," replied the lady, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out some terrible sight.

"Where they beat him must be many miles away, lady?"

"Ah, that I cannot tell. I know nothing of the Giant Forest."

"Rudolph must see to that," thought Ulgitha. "We must take care we leave no chance of detection. As for the two women, they are lost. The robbers never let their female booty escape to tell tales."

Leaving this cunning and evil woman to play the part of hypocritical hostess to her unfortunate guests, we will now follow for a time the adventures of the diamond merchant, whom we left riding swiftly into the dangers of the Giant Forest.

CHAPTER V.

I am not used to fear, yet in the look
He cast upon me as I rode away
There was much malice, and a cunning leer
That spoke successful treachery.

Howe.

ERNEST VAN DE VEER, whose earlier history and origin will be told during the progress of our story, though in truth a diamond merchant, had seen much of a soldier's life, and had been knighted upon a field of battle, years before, by Charles IV., Emperor of Germany, for his prowess and courage. Therefore, we shall designate him as Sir Edred hereafter.

He spurred from the "Iron Hand" inn, as we have told, his heart full of anger against Schwartz and Ulgitha, whom he had recognized as those who had tried to take his life. He little imagined that in doing so he was leaving his two most precious living gems, and a gem yet to be born, as well as immense wealth in diamonds and other jewels, in the merciless, rapacious grasp of the very wretches who had, five years before, struck him with their daggers.

The suspicious proposal of the innkeeper to act as his guide had caused a sudden flush of wrath, to

which he was subject; and not wishing to tarry longer where he believed so little was to be gained, he had spurred away impatiently.

"I would sooner trust to fortune," he said, as he galloped on, "than to the company of a rascal who has already attempted my life. The 'Iron Hand' inn? I have heard of it. I was warned to shun it. I little suspected, when I was so warned in Zweibrücken, that it was the very spot where, five years ago, I narrowly escaped with life—escaped wounded and bleeding."

As he swept swiftly over the brow of a hill, he turned his head for an instant and glanced back at the inn.

It was at that moment that Schwartz left Ulgitha, and ran at full speed into the ravine. The eagle-like eyes of Sir Edred saw this act, and as he spurred on he thought:

"So! the rascal still intends evil against me! He doubtless is an ally, if not a member, of that accursed association they spoke of in Zweibrücken—the Black Riders of the Giant Forest. I ought to have journeyed with an escort, as I was advised to do. But that last letter from Louise alarmed me. She wrote that if she received no letter from me within four weeks, she should set out for Zweibrücken. Her letter is dated more than a month ago, and reached me but four days ago. So I fear she has already set out. With that fear, I set forth, hoping to have the good fortune to meet her; and here am I, lost in the mazes of the dangerous Giant Forest, and how many miles I have strayed from the safe road I know not. I should have taken an escort, or at least a guide. But I dared not trust an escort of such troopers as I saw in Zweibrücken. It was known, too, that it was Sir Edred Van De Veer, the rich diamond merchant, and I was warned that there were many eager to be hired by me as protectors, only that on the journey they might slay, and plunder me."

A bitter smile curled his lip as he added, in thought still, for he was not a man to betray a secret by speech, even in fancied total solitude:

"Little would they have found on their wished-for prey, for my wife has all the fruit of my years of diamond trade. True, I am well provided with gold for my journey, but a few golden and silver coins make not the booty robbers hope to find upon Sir Edred Van De Veer, the diamond merchant. So I left by stealth, and in the dead of night. I dared not trust even a guide; though, as for that, having twice before made the journey between Spargburg and Zweibrücken, I believed I could make it again without a guide. 'Tis well known that the Black Riders of the Giant Forest have their secret agents in Zweibrücken, who give speedy information to the Riders when anything that may be made rich booty is about to pass near the forest."

Here a painful apprehension of evil pressed so heavily and suddenly upon his brain that he drew rein abruptly—as abruptly as he had before the stone steps of the "Iron Hand" inn.

"Great Heaven!" he thought as he swept his hand over his eyes. "Tis said, too, that the Riders have their agents also in Spargburg. What if my wife has set forth, guided by one of those agents, knowing her to be the wife of Edred Van De Veer, the diamond merchant!"

His resolute, sun-browned face grew pale as death, and he trembled violently as he sat there bewildered and terrified by his thoughts.

"Oh, I thought of this in Zweibrücken, and it was that fear which made me spring from a sick-bed and hurry towards Spargburg. But the fear came not upon me then as it does now. It seemed then a mere possibility! Now it clinches on my heart like a fact! on my brain like a horror! My wife, my beloved Louise! and as her letters have told me, so soon to have a babe at her breast! Ah, and my brave boy—my noble Ernest! Yet I have hope she may not have been so rash. I did urge in my letters—nay, I did solemnly command her not to leave Spargburg. But she may have heard that I was ill—that I lay yonder in Zweibrücken at the point of death. She dearly loves me, and would risk her life a thousand times to reach my bedside, that her tender hands might serve and soothe me! Ah, me! Something warns me that evil has befallen her, or is close upon her."

As the reader is aware, this fear of the diamond merchant was too true. All had happened as he feared.

Another event had come about, of which he knew nothing, though his knowledge of men and affairs had caused him to suspect it.

While he lay ill in Zweibrücken, a note, couched in those words, had left that city as swiftly as a fleet horse and wily courier could carry it:

"The rich diamond merchant, Sir Edred Van De Veer, the same who, five years ago, repulsed and escaped the attack made upon him by the Riders, and

cluded the attack afterwards made by the two at the inn, is now here. He lies very ill at the 'Silver Shade' inn. We have our eyes upon him. He is convalescent, 'tis reported by the doctor who attends upon him, who is also one of ours. It is not known yet whether Sir Edred intends to journey; but as his wife has been tarrying for several weeks at Sparburg, doubtless, on his recovery, he will hasten thither. It is believed that he carries with him many jewels.

"This is to prepare you for more, which you shall be told hereafter. It may chance that Lady Van De Veer will set forth from Sparburg for Zweibrudden. See to it that, in such case, a proper guide be provided for her.

"To-morrow will see a fat trader of Antwerp journeying towards the forest. He carries a heavy purse, and goes afoot, with but one servant. Both are to be disguised as beggars, but the servant is one of us, and will wear a green cap.

"Let this content you until you hear more. We will inform you, should Sir Edred move in your direction. If he procures an escort, be assured more than half will be of our furnishing. VIGILANCE."

But, as the reader may have inferred from the quoted thoughts of Sir Edred, his sudden and secret departure from Zweibrudden had given him who signed himself "Vigilance" no chance to warn the Black Riders of his coming.

From the moment of his midnight departure from Zweibrudden he had ridden as fast as horse could gallop, changing a wearied steed for a fresh one whenever occasion demanded.

Fearing, or rather suspecting that the discovery of his departure would prompt those who might desire his capture to send forth fleet couriers, who should by some other route reach the plundering domains of the Riders before him, he had ridden hard and fast, not even pausing to eat at any of the roadside inns until he had been in the saddle two days and nights, but subsisting on the food he had taken care to carry with him.

Though the main road was in general secure for travellers, he knew that the boldness of the Riders sometimes led them so far from their usual haunts, especially when booty of great value was expected. Though, as a custom, the Riders trusted to the treachery of guides whom they kept in pay to lead their charges astray, and to treacherous escorts of the many evil characters at that time swarming in Germany, he knew that the cunning and audacity of the Riders, stimulated by the desire of making so rich a prize as they supposed him to be, would lead them to dare a chance encounter with such powers of the land as poorly guarded the highway.

On the third night of his flying journey, fatigue had forced him to rest many hours at an inn. Had stout and hardy Sir Edred not been ill so recently, his powerful and steel-like frame would not have succumbed to fatigue, even after two nights and three days of steady riding, except at long intervals to snatch an hour's sleep.

On the morning of the day we saw him ride up to the "Iron Hand" inn, he had mounted a fresh and strong horse, which he had taken care to purchase before he slept, and feeling fully restored to his former strength, resumed his journey. But near the hour of noon, misled by indistinct remembrance of the right road, for by that time he had reached a very lonely part of the country, and where three roads crossed, he had journeyed on many miles ere he became aware that he was astray.

After he became aware of this unpleasant fact, he found himself more and more bewildered, until he halted, as has been told, in an agony of fear for the safety of his wife, his son, and the great riches they had in charge.

The fear had not at any time, for days, been absent from his mind, but at this moment it came upon him with the force of a violent blow struck by an invisible but powerful hand.

"She and Ernest are in the hands of Heaven, wherever they may be," he thought, after a long pause. "And so am I, though I am lost within the Giant Forest. It avails nothing to imagine the good or evil that may be their fate. To serve them, if yet that is in my power, I must first rescue myself from danger. This road seems broader and more used than any I can see from this point, and, trusting in Heaven, ever so kind to me, I will ride on. If night overtake me ere I see my way more clearly, I must sleep in the forest, for my horse begins to show great weariness."

Another dark and mistrusting glance towards the "Iron Hand" inn, and Sir Edred rode on, going deeper and deeper into the perils of the Giant Forest at every step, and farther from those he loved so dearly.

The deep darkness of night, made intense by the density of the foliage of great trees, soon encompassed him, and, recognising the folly of attempting

to make his way out of the forest under such circumstances, he dismounted, led his wearied horse far aside from the narrow road he had been trying to follow, and, wrapping himself up in a cloak which he took from behind his saddle, and with the saddle for a pillow, lay down and slept.

Sleep came upon him swiftly, despite the tumultuous anxiety of his mind.

Thus at the same time, and but a few miles apart, slept Sir Edred and his son Ernest, each with his saddle for a pillow.

It was scarcely dawn when stout Sir Edred was again mounted upon his good steed, which he found grazing quietly upon tender leaves and boughs when he awoke.

"Thank Heaven I still live!" thought Sir Edred, after regaining the dubious path he had left the night before. "Come," he added, aloud, patting the neck of his horse, "I shall leave the choice of roads hereafter to you, my friend, for dumb instinct may serve me better than my own reason. So go on, and Heaven be our guide, for I know not where we are."

Coming soon to a place where a small path crossed that in which he was, the horse, unrestrained by his rider, halted, neighed, and then turning into it, bolted away as if the place were by no means unfamiliar to him.

"Ho!" thought Sir Edred as he observed this.

"It is very clear that my horse has been hereabouts before to-day. Yesterday I likewise trusted to him, after hours of vain effort to regain the highway, and it ended in his bearing me to the front of the 'Iron Hand' inn. Hast thou been in the service of the Black Riders, my friend? Perhaps stolen by them from some honest owner; made to serve the rascals for a time, and then sold to honest men, to be sold again to an honest man—for such I trust I am—whom thou art bearing, at this round, sharp pace, straight towards some rendezvous or haunt of thy former masters, the robbers."

Such was indeed the truth, and, shrewdly fearing as much, Sir Edred looked keenly to the right and left, and drew the hilt of his sword nearer to his grasp, in case of need.

"I've cut my way through worse affairs than this may prove to be," he thought as he kept eye and ear on the alert, and drew down the visor of his steel cap.

The horse, evidently familiar with the narrow and continually winding path he had selected, kept on at a rapid, eager trot, and though not unfrequently other paths crossed his course, never, even for an instant, hesitated in his pace.

Thus, for more than two hours, he continued to move on amid the deep shade and silence of the dense forest, a forest of great trees with immense spreading tops and branches of interlaced and tangled foliage, through which the rays of the rising sun rarely penetrated. The trunks of these trees were hedged about by heavy undergrowth, so that at times Sir Edred could almost imagine himself passing through some subterranean passage, so close and dark was the way.

Sir Edred was a bold and daring man, but the age was one of superstitious belief, and though his stout heart was nerved to defy any peril that might assail him in mortal shape, his soul recoiled from the dread of being hailed by some wood demon, or phantom wolf, or any of the many weird monsters with which the fables of the times peopled dark and gloomy forests.

Legends of witches, wizards, gnomes, dwarfs, giants, and malicious spirits, in shapes of mortals, horribly deformed, revelled in his mind, so that, in reflecting upon these imaginary dangers, he forgot wholly the real perils of his situation.

But while the mind and imagination of the diamond merchant were thus tortured by fears of the supernatural, his steed, neighing loudly, and breaking suddenly into a gallop, carried him swiftly into an open area of considerable size.

This area, engirt on every side by lofty trees and dense foliage, had plainly been recently occupied by men and horses. The tracks, foot-prints and hoof-prints of each, and the remains of provender scattered here and there upon the soft greenward, told Sir Edred that not many hours had passed since this place had been a scene of temporary encampment.

Permitting his steed to feed upon a half-emptied sack of oats which the hungry animal selected as worthy of his attention, Sir Edred, still grasping his drawn sword, flashed his eyes about him.

"It is as I suspected," he thought. "My horse has been in the service of the Black Riders, and he has brought me to one of their places of rendezvous. They have been here recently."

Not unskilled in woodcraft, he dismounted, and began to examine the footprints about him.

"They were here yesterday," he continued, after a brief, yet careful scrutiny. "This spider's web over

this fresh hoof-print tells me that. Ah, and here is a woman's veil," he added as he stooped and picked up a fragment of green silken gauze. "Not a veil, but part of one—a relic of some unfortunate victim, perhaps, of the lawless riders of the forest."

Only a fragment of a woman's veil, heavy and damp with the morning's dew, a mere trifle of stained and hoof-trampled gauze, at which Sir Edred Van De Veer gazed for a moment reflectively, and which he was about to cast aside, when his eye caught sight of something embroidered upon its torn and tattered edge.

It was part of a name, skilfully worked in delicate silver thread—only part of a name, but enough to make the powerful frame of the diamond merchant tremble from head to heel, as if the chill of death had swept to the very marrow of his bones—only part of a name, thus:

"Louise Van De"—and the rest torn off.

"Oh, Heaven!" groaned he, staring at this tell-tale relic with glaring eyes and reeling brain. "My wife has fallen into the hands of the Black Riders!"

(To be continued.)

MONTROSE;

OR,

THE RED KNIGHT.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Thy vow fulfilled, thy work complete,

Go, hasten thee to thy repose;

No more pursue with flying feet

The path of vengeance on thy foes. Byron.

WHEN the last of the fleeing brothers had disappeared, the Red Knight approached the prisoners, and leaped from his saddle. His first movement was towards the countess, whom he unbound and lifted to the ground; and then he performed a like office for Isabel, while some of his companions cut the cords from the limbs of Sir Robert and Bertram; and it remained for the latter to set Margaret Ramsey at liberty.

"Heaven be praised for this!" ejaculated the mysterious warrior. His voice trembled, and through the interstices of his visor the glittering of bright tears could be seen.

Isabel first blessed him, who had saved them, and then hastened to her lover's side; and for a season there was something like delirium in the manifestations that followed. Lady Montrose, for a time, seemed hardly able to realise that she had been saved. There was, to her, something so inexplicable—something so wondrous—in the very presence of the mystic knight, that she was half inclined to accept the whole thing as a pleasant phantasy, beaming for a season upon her way, only to be dissipated in an hour. But when the Knight of St. John held her by the hand, and bade her be of good cheer, assuring her that the strength of her enemies was broken, she took the bright spirit of hope to her bosom, and grew strong again.

"Oh, sir," said Isabel, as the Red Knight released the hand of the countess, and turned towards the others of the party, "you know not how timely was your appearance. Heaven must have sent you to our aid."

"And yet, dear lady," returned the unknown, with visible emotion, "I shudder when I think how near I came to being too late. I had long foreseen this blow, and had planned to meet it; and for that purpose were these brave knights banded with me; but we had other interests to look after. There were Christian settlements towards Damascus which we had to relieve. The plan of Vikram had been to join Marouf in the attack upon Montrose not earlier than to-morrow. This was known to me, and I rested easily upon the knowledge. Of course, I knew that St. Julien, in his wrath, might make a demonstration at any time; but him alone I feared not. It seems, however, that the attack of the villagers upon the Black Tower, and the imprisonment of the emir, precipitated matters. Word was conveyed to the recreant Norman of the fall of Marouf, and he at once sent his force to join the Saracens in retaking the Tower; and thus they were ready to unite with St. Julien in besieging Montrose."

"Alas! the mishap has cost us many brave and true men; but we can yet thank Heaven for its abundant mercy!"

After this, the Red Knight walked away, and conferred with his companions, and when he returned Douglas addressed him.

"Gracious sir, you will pardon me for my question; but I know the ladies must be anxious, and I make bold to ask whither we are now to go. It may not be known to you that Lystra and Montrose are in ruins."

"I know all," returned the knight. "But were Montrose standing as strong and as fair as ever, we

would not seek it. Lady Belinda, listen: The evil which hath fallen upon Lystra and upon Montrose was foreseen by your husband. He was one of an organisation of true and loyal knights, who had pledged themselves to stand by each other in every emergency. Knowing to what dangers he was exposed, he exacted from me a promise that, in case of accident to himself, I would look to the safety of his family, and, if need be, see them on their way to England. And that promise I will now fulfil. A few leagues from this place, beyond the Pass of Keth, towards the sea, is a monastery where you may repose in safety until further arrangements can be made. Our good bishop, Hubert de Balzan, hath already sought its shelter; and as the day is well spent, we will delay no longer here."

While the ladies were making ready, the Red Knight rejoined his companions, and after a brief consultation, twelve of them rode off to the southward, while the other twelve remained to accompany their chief. In answer to a question from Douglas, the unknown said that the knights who had ridden away had gone to look after matters at Buchala.

Ere long the horses were ready, and the party in their seats; and, under the guidance of the Red Knight, they set forth. They followed the valley road a short distance, and then struck off to the westward; and before dark they had entered the Pass of Keth, and in two hours afterwards had reached the valley of the Jordan. Here they found the monastery in charge of a body of Carmelite monks, and when they had entered the court the good bishop was one of the first to greet them. Refreshments were speedily served, and after this the Red Knight informed the countess and her companions that he should leave them for a season.

"Hold!" he said, as he observed the looks of consternation, and saw Douglas start to his feet. "It will not be for long. I have duties to perform which I must not neglect; and I would so perform them that I may be able to return with you to England. Six of my knights will bear you company to Tyre, and I shall there meet you. You have a safe conduct over the mountains, and need apprehend no more danger."

Having thus spoken he advanced to the countess, took her hand, and held it for a moment in his grasp. Then he did the same by Isabel; but he spoke not a word further. With his head bowed, and his crimson plume drooping upon his breast, he retired from the apartment, and shortly afterwards the tramp of horses' hoofs was heard upon the pavement of the court.

It seemed to our adventurers like some strange dream; and they wondered, as they sought their pillows for the night, if the mystery would ever be solved.

On the following morning the family of Montrose, together with the good bishop and the six knights whom the red chieftain had left, as soon as they had broken their fast, prepared to set forth upon their journey. Douglas had been fully armed and equipped, and was as fair and gallant a knight as any of the train.

On the afternoon of the fourth day they entered the city of Tyre, which was at that time the seat of Henry, Count of Champagne; and Hubert at once conducted them to the count's residence, who received them cordially. Lady Montrose and Isabel were well known to him; and he had heard of the valiant deeds of the young Marquis of Doon.

And here our friends were removed from the theatre of the treasonable war which had rendered Antioch and Tripoli so unsafe; for the city which had withstood the utmost that Saladin, in the plenitude of his power, could bring against it, had not yet harboured treason in any form.

Beneath the hospitable roof of the Governor of Tyre our adventurers soon recovered from their fatigue, and Lady Montrose was informed that a large Venetian ship then lay in the harbour, on board which passage had been secured for her family and friends. Under other circumstances the prospect of a speedy return to her native land might have inspired her with joy; but now the thought of the old home in England only brought with it the companion thought of her great loss. Where was the stout arm that had so long upheld her? where the faithful bosom upon which she had so confidently reposed? where the true heart that had held her through the proud years, in sunshine and in storm, as a part of its own self? Alas! where? Never before had she felt the loss as she felt it now; and the resolve was shaping itself in her mind that she would never leave the land where her love was buried, when word was brought to her that the Red Knight of St. John had arrived.

It was evening, and the friends were gathered in a sumptuously furnished apartment of the governor's palace. The countess and Isabel sat upon a low couch near the tapestry that curtained a Gothic window, while Margaret reclined upon an ottoman

close by. Douglas and Bertram sat upon the opposite side, the latter with Margaret's lute in his lap, one of the strings of which he had been fixing. The good bishop, Hubert de Balzan, had just entered with the announcement of the mystic knight's arrival.

"He has not only arrived," said the bishop, "but he has closed his work in Palestine, and will return to Europe with us."

"Then his vow is fulfilled?" suggested Douglas.

"His vow is fulfilled," answered Hubert.

"And we shall now know him—we shall behold him face to face—the thick cloud of mystery will be removed?"

"Yes."

"When will he be with us?"

"I think, very soon. He is now with the governor."

"My lord," said Isabel, looking earnestly into the bishop's face, "you already know his secret?"

"Lady!"

"Ah, I see it in your look. You and Bertram both know."

"Indeed, my child, you give me wondrous credit upon the basis of a simple look. It may be that you mistook the nature of my look. If I regarded our good Bertram in a manner unusual, it was because he had promised that when we met again he would tell me a strange story."

"If Bertram has a story to tell," interposed Douglas, "may we not hear it?"

"That's for him to say."

"Bertram—"

"My friends," said the esquire, "I did promise his grace that I would tell to him a wonderful story; and if you please to listen, I will tell it now. It may serve to occupy the time until the arrival of our mysterious friend."

They were all anxious to hear it, and after a pause Bertram spoke as follows:

"Once upon a time—a time during these very Crusades—there was a Christian knight, brave, gallant, and true, and of wonderful prowess; and among all the soldiers of the Cross the Infidel Saracen had not a more determined enemy than was he. At length it fell out that a wicked conspiracy was entered into between certain recreant Franks and the Saracen chiefs, whereby the interests of the Cross were to be crushed, and the true Christians swept away. This brave knight entered into a solemn compact with others of his class to oppose this conspiracy, and in pursuing his plans he incurred dangers that would have appalled many a bold man. At length the Saracens knew that he was the chief among their enemies; they determined to overcome him, and in pursuing this work they received the assistance of traitorous Christians. In an hour when the noble knight thought not of peril—when all thought of danger was put from his mind—he was set upon by overwhelming numbers, and captured before he fairly knew that enemies were near. He was borne to a Saracen prison, and there told that he might live if he would renounce all opposition to Islam. This offer he spurned with indignation. He was then consigned to a deep, dark dungeon, where he was sentenced to famish if he would not recant. Not a morsel of food, nor a drop of water, was to be given to him; and he was slowly to starve and die."

"Oh! horrible!" gasped Lady Montrose.

"It was indeed horrible, lady; but the Saracen chief did not pass this dreadful sentence from a mere love of revenge. He hoped that the pangs of hunger, and the tortures of thirst, might bring his prisoner to the desired recantation."

"But the noble knight did not recant?"

"You shall hear. He was consigned to the deep dungeon without nourishment of any kind, and every day a little wicket in the iron door was opened, and a Saracen jailer looked in and asked him if he would recant."

"The Christian knight had not been altogether alone in his dungeon."

"Five days passed—days that must have consumed his life had they been passed as his captor intended; and on the evening of the fifth day the wicket was opened, and the jailer looked in. The prisoner had heard the approaching footstep, and had thrown himself upon the low pallet, where he gasped and groaned; and his ruse was successful. The Saracen, thinking the man was dying, unbarred the heavy door, and entered; and as he stooped to set his lantern upon the floor, frightening away a swarm of rats as he did so, the knight leaped upon him and bore him down. Never was the Christian warrior's strength greater than in that hour. He bore the Infidel down, and possessed himself of his scimitar; not the Christian knight, but the Moslem jailer, died in that dungeon!"

"And then, without delay, the knight stripped the lifeless body of its clothing, and in place thereof he put his own garments, while he, in turn, donned the garb of the Moslem. Then he picked up the lantern, and in this guise he went boldly out from his prison

—went up into the outer courts, where, in the gloom of evening, none recognised him for other than the jailer. And he went out from the stronghold of his enemies, free and strong. On the next day search was made in the dungeon, and they found there something left of a human body—something in the habiliments of the Christian knight."

A brief pause, and Lady Montrose, with a smothered cry, started to her feet.

"Bertram! Bertram!—oh, what is this mystery?"

"Hush, lady! Here comes our mystic friend. It was he who told the story to me; and he can explain."

The heavy silken arras was drawn aside, and a man of noble, gallant mien entered the apartment. It was surely the Red Knight of St. John; but in place of the heavy armour he now wore a rich garb of crimson velvet, and a veil of silk covered his face. He advanced directly to the countess, and took her hand. His broad bosom rose and fell like the heaving of mighty billows, and his stout frame shook.

"Lady," he said, in subdued tones, "my vow is fulfilled. Behold me as I am!"

He removed the veil, and Belinda Montrose looked up into the face of her husband.

"Oh, merciful powers! is this a dream? Darwin—my husband! Am I mad—or has kind heaven worked a miracle?"

And Isabel, with a rapturous cry, as she beheld the face of her father, sprang to his bosom, and twined her arms about him.

"My wife—my child!" the old noble said, while big tears rolled down his cheeks, "the only miracle that has been wrought has been told to you by our good Bertram; for it is my own story he has related."

"It was hard," he went on, after he had conducted his wife and child to their seats, and had greeted Douglas—"it was very hard, to hold myself from my loved ones; but I was forced to it. Five-and-twenty of us knights, learning of the wicked conspiracy between Malek-Adel and Vikem the Norman for the overthrow of the Christians in the Valley of Lebanon, entered into a solemn compact of opposition. We swore that we would learn the enemy's plans, and save such of the Christians as we could; and to do this successfully we must labour in secret; so we took a vow which bound us to show our faces to no human being, while in armour, until our work was accomplished. You can believe, my dear wife, that I found it hard to keep the secret from you; but had my secret leaked out, and had our enemies known that I was Chief of the Mystic Knights, our pious plan would have been quickly thwarted. As it is, we have saved many Christian lives. We saved Zircan, and Korisch, and Hamah; and we should have saved Lystra but for the accident which you already know—the precipitation of the attack caused by the capture of the Black Tower. However, my best treasure is preserved; and though many lives have been lost, yet we have averted much calamity, and have great reason to be thankful."

"And Sir Darwin Montrose is one and the same with the Red Knight of St. John?" said Douglas, with a puzzled look.

"The same, Robert."

"But," pursued the youthful Scot, "the mystery is not yet elucidated. Even while you, Sir Darwin, were in your castle, and in your own guise, I beheld the mystic knight enter and call you away to council; and I saw you bid him adieu in the court. How was that?"

"That," replied the earl, with a smile, "was an artifice which I adopted to render my secret more secure. I feared that my old men-at-arms might suspect me; and to the end that any such suspicion might be nipped in the bud, I took Bertram into our counsel, and he assumed the oath with us. My armour fitted him exactly; and he it was who personated the Red Knight on the occasion to which you refer, and on other occasions when such personation was necessary."

"But there is need of mystery no more. My work is done, and I feel that I can honourably rest from my labours. The best part of my life has been spent in battle with the Saracen, and those whom I love have been called to share my dangers and my toils. Henceforth we will court more pleasant scenes; and leaving a work in this far-off country, which I am fully convinced is utterly impossible of accomplishment—leaving these burning sands, and these rugged mountains—leaving the land which the children of Islam must possess—leaving the soil which has swallowed up so much precious blood—we will seek the home of our own dear England, and there worship Heaven in peace!"

Robert Douglas saw the earl take his wife and child once more to his bosom, and he turned away to the Gothic window, and bowed his head. Presently he felt a hand upon his arm, and, looking down, he met the gaze of Isabel.

Sir Darwin beheld the movement, and with a countenance made radiant by holy impulse, he approached the spot.

"Robert," he said, "you once asked me to leave Jasper St. Julien to the retribution of your hand. I could not do it. He had stricken me too deeply. He was a traitor and a villain. He had not only laid his sacrilegious hand upon the Cross of Christ, to tear it down, but he would have robbed me of my wife and child. I struck the blow of avenging justice, and the dear ones were saved. But mourn not, my brave boy. Though you could not share in the work of the traitor's final overthrow, you shall yet share in the priceless spoil I saved from his grasp. Thus—thus, I make the deed—and our good bishop shall put upon it the seal of Heaven!"

As he spoke, he united the hands of Douglas and Isabel, and then moved back, and gazed upon the new joy he had created—a joy in that hour, and a joy for the unknown years—a joy to be the more pure and enduring from the chastening influence of the sore trials through which it had been brought into life.

THE END.

THE PEARLS OF ERIN;

OR,

THE HALF SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

POINT KILDARE, on the coast of county Antrim, in the north of Ireland, had been for many generations the home of the Earls of Kildare. As its name implies, it was a point of land jutting out into the North Channel, but it was also an island, being divided from the main land by a deep and narrow stream with high and rocky banks. This stream, known as the Kildare Cut-off, was spanned by a massive draw-bridge, which was tended by an old retainer, whose picturesque lodge nestled amid a forest of greenery on the Kildare shore.

The point, or island, thus watered on its four sides, enclosed within its boundaries a princely estate of over two thousand acres, comprising farms, hills, glens, and woods, in picturesque and charming arrangement. A wide drive, shaded by magnificent orchard trees, completely encircled the island, and stately avenues traversed the woods and parks and wound among the well-cultured farms, while sunny lanes and secluded footpaths led to the glens and more retired portions of the domain.

The chief feature of the island was, of course, the residence of its owners—Kildare Castle. It stood high up on a rocky bluff overlooking the channel, and presented a grand combination of towers and turrets and immense windows which glittered in the sunlight like glorious jewels. The waters alternately played and dashed against the sea-wall at the base of the castle, while on the three remaining sides of the hoary old structure extended terraces, lawns, and gardens, losing themselves in the other features of the island which we have described.

The present owner of Point Kildare, and the last representative of the grand old line of Kildare, was a woman.

The death of her father, the late earl, a few months previous to the opening date of our story, had left the young Lady Nora absolute mistress of her small principality, her guardian, an easy-natured, indolent old gentleman, residing on his own estates in England, and contenting himself with a semi-annual visit to his ward.

No queen was ever loved more tenderly than was the Lady Nora by her island tenantry and her servants, the faithful old retainers who had spent their lives in the service of her family.

Late one sunny afternoon in September, 1869, a horseman approached Point Kildare, coming from the direction of the small watering-place of Glenarm. He was well dressed and well mounted, and his appearance differed in no important particular from that of the ordinary fashionable young man of the day. He was about five-and-twenty years of age, with dark hair and eyes, and handsome features, but there was a sinister expression on his face and a mocking sneer on his full, sensual lips, that betokened a scheming and unscrupulous character.

"Well, I am almost there!" he muttered, aloud, coming to a halt on the brow of a hill and looking off upon the island of Kildare, its magnificent castle, and the shining waters beyond. "That's a fine sight spread out there!" and his dark eyes kindled with a greedy gleam. "The owner of all this wealth has no need to envy a king. It's a prize worth my best efforts! It is war between us, my unknown Lady Nora—war to the knife! In the deadly struggle before us, which shall win?"

His face darkened with a look of the keenest, deadliest resolve. It was evident that in the struggle

which he apprehended he would not be hampered by any sense of chivalry or honour.

He was about to move onward when the silence around him was suddenly broken by a full, rich bugle peal. The sound was followed by the baying of hounds and the tread of a horse's feet in the distance, the latter sound growing louder with each instant.

With the instinct of a cautious and secretive nature, and perhaps with an impulse of curiosity, the horseman drew back into the shadow of a spreading oak tree at one side of the road, and, halting there, waited.

The sound of beating hoofs grew yet louder, and presently a horse and rider dashed past, followed by a pack of hounds in full cry.

The rider, unattended save by the hounds, was a woman.

The watcher, bending forward eagerly in his saddle, caught a brief glimpse of a sunny, bewitching face, bright with youth and health, all aglow with spirit and animation, of a mass of floating, dusky hair under a trailing plume, and then the glowing vision swept on, and a cloud of dust veiled her from his view.

The horseman thrilled with a sudden excitement.

"It must be the Lady Nora herself!" he ejaculated. "How beautiful she is—the glorious little Amazon! I am impatient to learn how she will take the news I have to tell her!"

He rode on at a gallop, following in the lady's wake.

A few minutes later he arrived at the drawbridge over the Cut-off, and rode leisurely over it. The horsewoman, with her hounds, had disappeared up the avenue. As the stranger reached the Kildare shore, the old bridge-keeper, whose post was merely nominal, yet who faithfully adhered to ancient customs, came forward, touching his hat to the newcomer.

"I have business at the castle," said the horseman, tossing the old man a shilling. "Which turn shall I take?"

"To the right," responded the bridge-keeper, with a look of keen curiosity, for visitors at Kildare Castle were rare. "The Lady Nora has just come in."

The stranger touched his horse, and galloped along the broad avenue, while the old bridge-keeper looked after him, muttering:

"I don't like the looks of him! It's the eye of a snake he has! And yet he has the Kildare features, as sure as I'm born. Who can he be?"

Unconscious of the interest he had excited in the old bridge-keeper's breast, the horseman rode along the tree-arched avenue, following its curves along the shore of the island, coming at last upon the broad sweep leading to the chief door of the castle.

By this time the sun had set, and the shadows of the twilight were gathering. The doors and windows of the castle were all open, to give free play to the pleasant evening breeze, but the lawn was deserted, and no one was visible about the premises.

The stranger rode up to the portico and slowly alighted, and at the same moment a lad came running from the direction of the stables to take his horse. Resigning the animal to the lad's charge, the stranger ascended the tall and stately flight of steps, and sounded the massive burnished knocker after an imperious, authoritative fashion.

The summons was speedily answered by an old servitor, who gave him admittance into a grand old entrance hall, demanding his business.

"I wish to see Lady Nora Kildare," said the new-comer. "Be kind enough to tell her that a gentleman from London wishes to see her a few moments on business."

"What name, sir?"

"No matter about the name," returned the stranger, giving the old man a half-crown. "I wish to surprise her ladyship."

The servitor nodded sagely, and conducted the guest down the length of the magnificent hall, past stately drawing-rooms, into a pleasant, breezy parlour at the farther end, then retiring to execute his errand.

In the course of a few minutes he returned, with a message that her ladyship would see him presently, and the stranger was then left to himself.

For a little while, the guest found much to interest him in his surroundings. The room was luxuriously furnished, and its broad windows opened upon a wide balcony which overlooked, and seemed to overhang, the sea. The stranger stepped out on the balcony, and surveyed the scene, looking up at the castle, and down at the smooth waters, and around him on every side with glances full of scheming and calculation.

The long twilight was now deepening. The shadows began to gather thickly within the parlour. A servant came in and lighted the lamps, and drew the fluttering lace curtains, leaving the windows open to admit the air, and then went out. The

minutes passed slowly, and the sinister guest, re-entering the room, began to grow annoyed and impatient.

"Half-an-hour!" he said, looking at his watch, and frowning. "This is getting tiresome. Ah! there she comes now!"

The click of tiny boot-heels on the tessellated floor of the hall, and the rustling of garments penetrated to his hearing through the half-open door. The next moment the door was pushed wide open, and a young girl entered the room.

At the first glance the stranger recognised her as the gay and airy little vision he had seen an hour before on horseback on the road.

With an involuntary look of admiration, he arose and bent his head before her.

If she had looked beautiful when mounted on her horse, she was absolutely bewitching now, in her trailing robe of white muslin, and with her wide scarlet sash tied about her slender waist. She was about twenty years of age, slender and graceful, with a half-haughty carriage of her swaying figure, and a half-haughty poise of her small head, that were infinitely becoming to her. Her eyes were of a bronze-brown hue, shaded by black lashes; her complexion was dark and clear, and her hair, of a deep, dusky hue, fell over her shoulders in ripples and waves. The face was exquisitely piquant, bright, arch and sunny.

"You wished to see me, sir?" she asked, in a high, clear, sweet voice, and with a doubtful glance at the stranger. "I thought it was a neighbour."

The servant did not give me your name."

"You are then the Lady Nora Kildare?"

The young girl bowed gravely.

"And you?" she asked.

"Permit me to retain my name from your ladyship until I have unfolded my errand," said the stranger, politely. "I have travelled express from London to see you, and have letters with me from friends of yours which I will present in due time. You will listen to me?"

The Lady Nora hesitated, the stranger's manner and words striking her unpleasantly. But she was in her own castle, a score of retainers within call, and with a haughty little bond of her small head she signified her assent to his singular proposition.

"I will have my step-sister, the Lady Kathleen Connor, present," she said, touching the bell.

The stranger made no reply. A servant appeared, and the Lady Nora exclaimed:

"Ask the Lady Kathleen to come to me, Shane."

"The Lady Kathleen has gone out for a stroll on the rocks, my lady," returned the servitor. "She bade me say, if your ladyship should call for her, that it's not under an hour she'd be in."

"Very well," said the Lady Nora, and the servant retired.

The young girl then quietly took possession of an arm-chair, and pointing out another to her sinister guest, signified her readiness to listen to him.

"This is a grand old place," said the stranger, with a glance around him. "No doubt you love it, my lady, more than you love your life!"

"Love it!" repeated the Lady Nora, in a haughty surprise. "Love Kildare, the home of my ancestors, the spot where I was born! Why, all the traditions of our family are interwoven with this island. The old Irish kings from whom I claim descent had their strongholds on Point Kildare. It is, of all places in the world, the one most dear, most sacred, and most glorious to me! But," she added, coldly, checking herself abruptly, "what have my sentiments in regard to my home to do with you, sir?"

A strange gleam came into the stranger's eyes. A curious smile gathered about the corners of his thin lips, almost concealed by his bushy, overhanging black moustache.

"Much—everything!" he responded. "I came here to tell your ladyship that your possession of this cherished spot is menaced—"

"Menaced!"

"Yes, my lady. There is another claimant to Point Kildare!"

The Lady Nora uttered an exclamation of incredulity.

"You have been imposed upon," she said, haughtily. "I am the only child, and consequently the heiress of the late Earl of Kildare."

Again the stranger smiled, and there was something now in his smile that struck a vague chill to the Lady Nora's heart.

"The new claimant has a right superior to yours—superior to that of your late father," he exclaimed, with an air of assurance. "Permit me to tell you—"

The Lady Nora waved her hand, interrupting him.

"I decline to hear your statement," she said. "If your words, which seem so utterly preposterous, have any foundation in truth, I am not the one to whom you should come. I refer you to my guardian, Sir

Russel Ryan, who lives in England. He and his lawyers will soon dispose of any pretensions of the sort you are preferring."

She arose to withdraw.

"Stay!" cried the guest, his eyes suddenly blazing, as he stretched out his arm in a commanding gesture. "I have come here to tell you the story before the whole kingdom rings with it! You can at least hear what I have to say. If the evidence is insufficient, you will know that as well as Sir Russel Ryan. If it is overwhelming, and convinces even you, possibly your ladyship and your rival claimant may be able to effect some compromise, or the case may be referred to your guardian or the lawyers. I beg of you, for your own sake, to listen to me. If you refuse, you shall read all I have to tell in the Belfast papers of the day after to-morrow."

The threat had its effect. The Lady Nora resumed her seat, her face becoming a shade paler.

"Of course," she said, "I know this rival claim is a forged one, if any rival claim exists. But I will hear what you have to say. Only be as brief as possible."

"I will," said the stranger. "It will be necessary for me to begin with a slight retrospect. Your grandfather, the fifteenth Earl of Kildare, died some five years since, at a ripe old age; and his son, your father, my Lady Nora, then in the prime of life, succeeded to the title and estates. This so far is true?"

"The whole kingdom knows that it is true," said the young girl, coldly.

"The whole kingdom also knows that your father, the latest earl, inherited Kildare in consequence of the death of his elder brother. Let me revive your knowledge of your family history. Lord Kildare, your grandfather, had two sons, Redmond and Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald was your father. Redmond was a wild young fellow, who spent most of his time in England, lost money on the turf, kept a costly yacht, and indulged in every luxury and fashionable dissipation of the day. He ran through his money and his health, and died at the age of thirty-one, a prematurely old man. Had he left legitimate issue, that issue would have inherited Kildare, to the total exclusion of your father and yourself."

"I am acquainted with the law of primogeniture," said the Lady Nora, as coldly as before.

"You recognise the truth, then, of this great fact?" demanded the sinister guest, with some excitement.

"You comprehend that if Lord Redmond Kildare left a lawful son, that son would now be Lord Kildare, and the owner of this vast property?"

"The fact is perfectly plain."

An exultant gleam shone in the stranger's eyes. A triumphant glow overspread his face.

"Listen!" he cried, his voice ringing through the room. "Lord Redmond Kildare, your father's elder brother, did leave a lawful son and heir. Lord Redmond was secretly married to an actress who was for a while the rage in London. He made her his lawful wife, and withdrew her from the stage, establishing her in a cottage at St. John's Wood. Knowing his father's inveterate family pride, he dared not acknowledge his marriage, the more especially as his wife had no wealth or family connections to back her, and there were enemies ready to impeach her previous good name. Lord Redmond soon tired of his actress wife, and repented his folly in marrying her. The birth of a son had not power to win back his affections to his wife, and he coolly abandoned her when his child was less than a year old. The wife had one noble quality at least—her love for him. She went mad at his desertion of her, and was placed in a private lunatic asylum. Lord Redmond continued his wild career; and a year or two later, worn out with his excesses, came home to Point Kildare to die. With his proud old father at his bedside, with his younger brother ministering tenderly to him, he could not, and dared not, acknowledge the existence of his wife and her son. He died with the secret untold. And that wife and son are both living to-day."

Lady Nora looked at the narrator with dilating eyes. She could not trust her voice to speak.

"The marriage certificate is in existence. There are yet living witnesses to that strange, secret marriage. There is a certificate of the son's birth. There are letters which Lord Redmond Kildare wrote to his wife before she went mad, some of them bearing date from Point Kildare. A conclusive chain of evidence, not a link wanting, has been wrought out, and Lord Redmond's son is about to enter his claim for the inheritance."

"Why has he never put forward his claims before?" demanded the Lady Nora. "If this claim is made, you may be sure it will be closely investigated. This son, or pretended son, of Lord Redmond Kildare must be at least five-and-twenty years old. Why has he never come forward before? Why did he not make known his existence to my grandfather?"

Why did he not reveal himself to my father? Why has he waited until the estates have fallen into the hands of a young orphan girl? Does it not look as if he had feared to battle with men?"

A red flush burned on the stranger's cheek. His voice was husky as he answered:

"Until within a month, he has not known his own history. The marriage was secret, and intended to be kept secret until the death of Lord Redmond's father. When the mother was sent to a lunatic asylum, Lord Redmond placed his son in safe hands, keeping, however, the secret of the boy's parentage to himself, and having but a single confidant in the matter. He died, as I said, with the secret unrevealed. The boy grew up ignorant of his birth. And he would never have known it but that the insane mother was discharged a month since from her asylum, cured, and that he took her to his home, and there heard from her lips this story. Since hearing it he has collected all the proofs necessary to establish his mother's marriage and his birth. He is not a hard man, Lady Nora, although he has been hardly treated. He has no wish to war upon a young girl, but one thing he must have—justice. His mother's wrongs demand to be righted. He wants his rightful name and honours. He has had a hard struggle with the world so far, and he is determined now that the world shall give him his due. And so, Lady Nora, before proceeding to extremities and invoking the aid of the law, I have come to ask what you will do. Shall we effect a compromise? Or shall we go to war? There are letters and documents proving the claim," and he took from a breast pocket a bundle of documents tied with red tape, and laid them on the table. "And here is a letter to you from your kinsman, the Dublin lawyer, Mr. Michael Kildare, who was Lord Redmond's confidant all through, declaring that he was one of the witnesses of the secret marriage, and that he knows me to be Lord Redmond's son and heir. In this letter he gives the reasons for his utter silence concerning my existence. Again I ask, what is it to be between us—a compromise, or war?"

He arose and stood before her, with folded arms and a stern, set countenance, lighted by a lurid glow.

The Lady Nora arose also, pale with sudden agitation.

"And you," she whispered—"you are——"

"I am Redmond, the rightful Earl of Kildare," answered the stranger, his bold eyes flashing, as he raised his head proudly. "I am the son of your uncle Lord Redmond, by his marriage with the London actress. I am your cousin, Lady Nora, and your rival claimant to Point Kildare. Before arousing a scandal and going to law, I have come to you with proofs of my claims to offer you a compromise. Shall we be friends, or enemies?"

He looked at her with the air of one who held her destiny in his hands, while he awaited her answer.

CHAPTER II.

THE late Earl of Kildare, the father of the Lady Nora, had inherited the title and estates of Kildare somewhat late in life and had lived to enjoy his honours and possessions only three or four years. At the date at which we have introduced his daughter to our readers he had been dead a little more than a year.

He had been married twice. His first wife, a lovely Irish lady, the mother of Nora, had died in her daughter's childhood. He had married again, a year after coming into his title, his second wife being the widow of an Irish peer, with a daughter some eight years the senior of his own. This second wife had died some two years after her union with him.

The daughter of the second Countess of Kildare was the Lady Kathleen Connor, the step-sister for whom the Lady Nora had sent to attend her during her conference with the mysterious stranger who had subsequently announced his rival claims to Kildare.

While the strange interview between the rival claimants was proceeding in the breezy sea-side parlour, the Lady Kathleen was strolling along the rocks to the northward of the castle, keeping close to the water side, absorbed in her own thoughts.

The Lady Kathleen was in the prime of a magnificent and statuesque beauty. She was tall and fair and large, with a queenly figure, and slow and stately movements. Her complexion was dazzlingly white, and rendered fairer by contrast with the black lace shawl she had flung carelessly over her light brown hair. Her eyes were blue—of the deep rich, lovely blue only to be found now and then in Irish eyes, and when once seen never to be forgotten.

She had been educated in France, and had mingled for years in English society, but a year after

her mother's marriage to Lord Kildare she had come to the castle, where she had since remained, to the great surprise of her fashionable friends, who wondered that one so fitted by nature to adorn society could bear to bury herself in the seclusion of a lonely Irish castle on a lonely Irish coast.

Despite the difference in the ages of the two step-sisters, a warm and fervid attachment had sprung up between them, and Sir Russel Ryan, the guardian of the Lady Nora's fortune, deemed that she could have no better guardian of her person than the Lady Kathleen Connor.

There was a shade of anxiety on the lady's face as she walked on slowly, absorbed in her own thoughts, and a troubled look in her azure eyes that told of a strange and secret unrest.

Presently she arrived at a low rocky bluff, and here she sat down, wrapping her lace shawl closer about her, and looked with desolate eyes upon the waters, over which the twilight was softly closing down.

A few minutes later she was aroused from her reverie by the sound of a quick, light tread approaching her over the rocks from the direction of the castle. She looked up startled, and glanced over her shoulder, recognising the new-comer, as might be judged by the sudden flood of scarlet tinging her cheeks.

"Lord Tresham!" she exclaimed, half rising.

"Yes, it's Lord Tresham!" returned the intruder, as he came on with a springing tread. "I could not leave Ireland, Lady Kathleen, without a last visit to you, and here I am!"

By this time he had gained her side, and was holding out his hand to her.

He was a handsome, noble-looking man, of some thirty years of age, with a commanding figure, and a soldierly carriage that well became him. He was an Englishman, had been bred a soldier, but having recently come into his title, had sold out his commission as colonel and retired from the army. His black beard was cut short, after the military fashion, giving a rather stern expression to his square-cut face, which sternness was in part counteracted by the kindly gleam in his grave, pleasant eyes.

"You are going to leave Ireland, then?" asked the Lady Kathleen, the scarlet fading from her cheeks, leaving her strangely pale.

"I think I had better," returned Lord Tresham, with a heavy sigh. "I have been staying about here for months, like a moth fluttering about a candle. I have wearied your patience, Lady Kathleen, and have lived a life of suspense and anxiety. The only way to recover my lost peace is to go away and never see you again. And so I have decided to buy a commission in a marching regiment, and," he added, with a forced smile, "go where glory waits me!"

The Lady Kathleen sat down, trembling visibly. "You will bid me good-speed, Lady Kathleen?" said his lordship, trying to speak lightly. "You will even miss me, perhaps. Let me see. I have regularly offered myself to you three or four times a year for the last three years, and you will certainly miss my persecutions. I believe you came to Kildare to escape my unwelcome attentions; but there is no one so importunate as a desperate lover, and you did not escape me. But that last refusal the other night has proved to me at last my utter folly. I have only now to say, Good-bye. We shall never meet again, Kathleen. I hope that you will be happily married some day. As for me, I shall live and die out there in India. Give me your hand for the last time, Kathleen. We part friends at least?"

The Lady Kathleen put out her hand blindly. Lord Tresham took it in his. Its coldness and tremulousness struck him. He sat down beside her on the rocks, and bent forward, trying to peer into her averted face.

"You will miss me then, Kathleen?" he whispered.

"Miss you? Oh, my lord——"

The sweet voice trembled, and gave way. Something very like a sob escaped the Lady Kathleen's lips.

For a moment Lord Tresham seemed amazed. Then he started, his grave, stern face softening and lighting up with a sudden glow.

"Kathleen! Kathleen!" he cried. "Can it be that, after all, my years of devotion have touched your heart? Can it be that you repent your rejection of me, and that you really love me? Oh, Kathleen, say that it is so!"

He waited for her answer in an agony of hope and fear.

The two were so absorbed in each other that neither heard nor heeded the quiet approach of an elegantly dressed man who was also coming from the direction of the castle. He had gained the shadow of adjacent rocks, when Lord Tresham's impassioned questioning attracted his attention. He came abruptly to a halt, listened to his lordship's

words, swept a hasty glance around him, to assure himself that his movements were unmarked, and then quietly dropped down into the shadow of the rocks, crouching there in a position to hear and see all that passed between the lovers.

From the strange expression on his face, one would have thought that he also was a lover of the Lady Kathleen, and that he hated with a bitter hatred his noble rival.

The Lady Kathleen did not reply to Lord Tresham's adjuration, except by another irrepressible sob, but she did not withdraw her cold hand from his, and his sudden hope was strengthened.

"Speak to me, Kathleen," he urged. "Shall I tell you for the hundredth time I love you? You are no coquette, Kathleen. You are not trifling with me? Say that you are not."

"No, I am not trifling with you, Lord Tresham," answered the Lady Kathleen, in a low, fluttering voice. "I did not mean you should ever know my secret, but—oh, Heaven help me!—I love you!"

"You love me?"

"Yes," she whispered, shivering as with pain.

"You love me!" cried Lord Tresham, half-credulously and wholly ecstatically. "You love me, Kathleen!"

"Yes," she answered, drooping low her white face. "I do love you, Barry. Take the knowledge with you to India—"

"To India!" interrupted Lord Tresham, clasping her to his heart with a sudden and uncontrollable impulse of love. "But I am not going to India now, Kathleen. I am going to stay with you, my love! my bride!"

The Lady Kathleen struggled to free herself from his embrace, and then looked up at him with wild and frightened eyes, and lips that quivered strangely.

"Don't!" she said, putting up one shaking hand feebly, as if to defend herself. "Don't speak so! There is more need than ever for you to go, Lord Tresham. I can never be more to you than I am now—never."

"I do not understand you, Kathleen," said Lord Tresham, recoiling.

"You will not understand me, Barry," said the lady, in a voice of anguish. "I shall never marry. There is a barrier between us—"

"A barrier, Kathleen! You do not mean that you are engaged to marry another—that you are not free?"

"No, I am free."

"Then what barrier should there be between us?"

The Lady Kathleen shuddered, and a low moaning cry of pain broke from her pale lips.

"I cannot tell you," she answered. "It is enough for me to say that there is a secret in my life which I can never reveal—not even to you. And that secret is the barrier between you and me, Barry Tresham. I could not go to you as your wife with that secret untold. You see, therefore, that we cannot be married."

"This secret concerns yourself, Kathleen?"

"Yes."

Lord Tresham released the hand he held, and paced to and fro over the rocks for a few moments, in anxious thought, passing very near to the spot where the unseen listener was crouching.

His lordship was a proud man, stern in his uprightness and fine sense of honour. But his love was stronger than his pride. The Lady Kathleen, watching him, saw the struggle that went on in his mind, and was not startled when presently he returned to her, and took her face gently between his hands, and studied it with a long, keen, and yearning gaze.

It was a pure as well as lovely face. Every delicate and noble feature expressed an honest, upright soul. There was no guile in those wide azure eyes, no guilt or shadow of wrong-doing about the sweet, tremulous mouth. He felt that he could stake his soul upon her purity and goodness.

"Kathleen," he said, and his voice thrilled her like strange music, "your secret is your own. I will never ask you what it is. But it is clear to me that it has caused you suffering and dread. Is it not so?"

"Yes," she answered. "It is like the sword of Damocles. When the morning dawns I never know what will befall me before the night. My life is full of terrors."

"You are not fit to cope with them alone, Kathleen. Perhaps, if they were shared with another, these terrors might lose half their force—"

The Lady Kathleen tried to withdraw herself from his embrace.

"It cannot be!" she said. "I cannot share them with any one."

Lord Tresham looked at her yet more closely, and then said:

"Kathleen, I will never ask you again to confide this secret to me. But I do ask you to give me the

right to protect you and care for you. You love me, and I love you. What, then, should prevent our marriage?"

"You would marry me, then, knowing that I possess a terrible secret I can never share with you—a secret which may yet be revealed to cover me with shame and anguish?"

Lord Tresham looked at her steadily, and answered, gravely:

"Do not mention shame in the same breath with the name of Kathleen Connor! I can shield you from the world, and I will do it! I comprehend that this secret of yours has kept us apart all these years. It must do so no longer. I am going to take your destiny into my hands, my poor Kathleen! We must be married, and at once!"

"Impossible!" murmured Kathleen, her face flushing. "There is nothing to prevent our marriage, Barry—there is no legal barrier; but I could never stand at your side with a crowd looking on to witness our marriage! I could not!"

And low, under her breath, she added:

"I dare not!"

"We could be married quietly then, Kathleen," said her ardent, generous lover. "There is a little old church over on the Scottish shore. You have often been there, and know the old minister well. My boat is on the shore, Kathleen—"

"No, no," broke in the Lady Kathleen, shuddering anew, as if stung by some sudden remembrance of fear. "It cannot be, Barry! I could never accept your generous sacrifice. The time might come when you would reproach me for it! If sorrow or trouble came to me you would have to share it. The more I think of it the plainer I see how impossible it is that we can be married!"

"Then you must not be allowed to think long on the subject," said Lord Tresham, with an air of smiling authority. "Kathleen, I've waited for you a long time, and now that I have won your love I don't mean to lose you through any over-delicate scruples on your part! I mean to make you my wife at once! You are of sufficient age to indulge in even so odd a freak as a quiet marriage without the usual 'pomp and circumstance.' Kathleen, I trust you implicitly. I know that your secret—terrible as it may be—involves no wrong-doing on your part. Now I want you to trust in me also, and show your trust."

"How, Barry?"

"By to-morrow you will be your own cold self again, and will condemn yourself for what you will call this night's weakness. I want you to put it out of your power to send me away hopeless and anguished. In short, I want you to marry me to-night."

The Lady Kathleen uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"To-night!" she repeated.

"To-night!" the watcher crouching in the rocks whispered hollowly.

"Yes," answered Lord Tresham, firmly. "It is but an hour's sail across to the old Scottish church. We can go and return before you will be missed. The Lady Nora has company, and will not think of you. We will take your maid as a witness to our marriage. And when you are mine, Kathleen, we will come quietly back to the castle and tell our story to Lady Nora. The quietest way is the best way. I never did like pomp and ceremony at a marriage. Trust to me, Kathleen, and do as I say."

The Lady Kathleen hesitated. She loved Lord Tresham with all the fervour of her nature. There were reasons, connected with her fearful secret, that made her dread any public marriage. But his lordship's persuasions, urged with all the tenderness of his great soul, inclined her to yield.

"I cannot!" she cried, struggling with her own heart and with his pleadings. "You will regret it some day, if I marry you now. You will live to curse me, Barry, for my weakness. Do not ask me."

But his lordship would not be warned. He continued to plead as one pleads for his life. He reminded her of his long love for her, his loneliness and his desolation, and he begged her to allow him to shield and protect her, protesting that he would never seek to know her hidden secret, and that no shadow could ever obscure the brightness of his love.

The end can be foreseen. The Lady Kathleen yielded to his persuasions, although with tears and trembling.

"Let us be off at once!" cried his lordship, in rapturous excitement. "Go for your maid, Kathleen, while I get the boat ready!"

He pressed her to his bosom, kissing her repeatedly, and hurried down to the beach. The Lady Kathleen went to the castle, presently returning, wrapped in a shawl, and attended by her maid.

A few minutes later, and the lovers were out upon the waters, on their way to the Scottish shore.

The twilight had deepened into night, and the moon had not yet arisen. The boat went sailing

away into the shadows, bearing the Lady Kathleen to a destiny whose good or evil fortune she could not yet know.

Lord Tresham's boat had become a mere shadow, when the crouching spy crept out from behind the rocks, hurried down the beach, entered one of the castle boats, and sailed after the lovers.

It was not yet midnight, when some three hours later the two boats landed within a few minutes of each other on the Scottish shore.

The old church stood near the shore. Lord Tresham left the Lady Kathleen and her maid in its porch, while he hastened to the minister's cottage.

The sinister spy skulked in the shadow of the trees near the church, for the moon was rising.

The minutes passed. At last Lord Tresham came back, full of happy exultation. The minister came behind him with the key of the church.

The Lady Kathleen exchanged greetings with Mr. Cowan, whom she knew well, and he then unlocked the church. The party entered.

"We will be married in the moonlight," said Lord Tresham. "There are fishermen on the beach, at a little distance, and we do not want intrusion."

The Lady Kathleen paused, looking up at him with sudden appealing.

"You are sure you will never regret this?"

"Quite sure, Kathleen. I will never regret it! And Heaven helping me, you never shall!"

The Lady Kathleen was reassured, and, taking his arm, she suffered herself to be led into the church.

It was dim and strange, the little church, full of dusky shadows and spectral glooms. The moonlight streamed in through the gay painted windows, throwing coloured streams of light upon the quaint, low pews. At the farther end of the vaulted room, behind his reading-desk, among the deepest shadows, the minister, Mr. Cowan, was standing, and on the pulpit stairs crouched the figure of Lady Kathleen's maid.

"They are waiting, you see, Kathleen," said Lord Tresham as the two stole up the dim and lonely aisle. "It will soon be over, darling."

A sudden panic seemed to seize the Lady Kathleen.

"We need another witness," she whispered. "Why don't Mrs. Cowan come? Go for her. I will wait in this pew until you return."

Lord Tresham obeyed, hurrying out on his errand.

A minute or two later, Mrs. Cowan silently entered the old church.

And behind her came the figure of the spy who had crouched behind the rocks at Kildare, and who had followed the lovers across the channel.

There was a desperate purpose in this man's mind.

In height and carriage he was not unlike Lord Tresham, in the dim light. The Lady Kathleen, in the darkness, and full of agitation, supposed him to be his lordship.

She arose at his approach.

The spy marked her movement with secret and terrible exultation. He had formed a bold, wild scheme, and he was determined to execute it.

"Come, Kathleen," he whispered. "We must lose no time."

He offered her his arm, which was accepted, and they approached the dim and shadowy altar. Mr. Cowan began the marriage service, for he, no less than the Lady Kathleen, supposed the daring intruder to be Lord Tresham.

"He'll be gone several minutes longer," was the thought of the intruder. "He missed Mrs. Cowan on the way. Before he returns the Lady Kathleen will be my wife."

The marriage service proceeded. The Lady Kathleen's senses were in a whirl, yet a deep, strange joy began to pervade her being. The questions were asked and answered. And finally the Lady Kathleen started from the delicious trance that held her trembling and frightened, to hear the solemn words:

"I now pronounce you man and wife! And whom Heaven has joined together let not man put asunder!"

The words were yet ringing through the grim shadows of the church, when the bridegroom stole his arm around the bride's slender waist, and pressed upon her lips the bridal kiss.

At the same moment steps were heard at the church porch and Lord Tresham came hurrying in alone.

A single glance at the two figures before the altar, and his lordship staggered back as if shot.

"Kathleen!" he cried.

The Lady Kathleen, with a shriek of terror, sprang from the arms of her bridegroom.

"Barry!" she cried. "Oh, great Heaven! Who is this?"

"It is your husband, my lady," said the sinister intruder, with a mocking bow.

(To be continued.)



[THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC.]

GENERAL TROCHU.

PARIS, the beautiful, the luxurious, the stately empress city of Europe, prepares herself for the greatest siege known in modern history, and the civilised world looks on astonished and horror-struck at the stern determination that has taken the place of its usual voluptuous habits. Its palaces are turned into hospitals, its theatres into barracks, the shameless classes that minister to modern luxury are ignominiously expelled, and the city that most of all affects to lead the world of pleasure now strives to show how well she can defy victorious armies and face the fate of war. If Paris could ever claim to be foremost among cities, surely she can do so now; and those who have shared in her enjoyments and basked in the sunshine of her fortunes can never withhold their sympathy at a moment like this, when, with her armies defeated, her bravest sons slain, her sovereign a captive, and her territories a prey to the invader, she flings aside alike the trappings of pleasure and the insignia of grief, and stands firmly on the defensive, resolved, if need be, to perish rather than buy a dishonourable immunity. In this supreme hour of her fate men watch the newly born Republic undergoing its terrible baptism of fire, and draw from its passage through the ordeal a prediction of its future.

While these words are written the enemy are within ten miles of Paris; before they are read the siege will have commenced—perhaps have terminated. The terrible guns that Krupp forges for the Prussians have been dragged through Bavarian forests and French mountain roads, through sandy country lanes by Châlons, and through fertile vineyards of Champagne to the very verge of the Parisian defences, and there, at this time of writing, almost within reach of the guns of the outlying forts, they prepare to bombard a city of nearly two millions of inhabitants.

In this crisis of her fate Paris has placed her

trust in one man, so suddenly and so unexpectedly that it is impossible not to feel the greatest interest in his character and in the very scanty particulars that are publicly known about a general who has, whatever his claims to distinction may be, never had the least opportunity of proving them.

Louis Jules Trochu, General of France, President of the Republic, and commander of the army of Paris, was born at Morbihan on the 12th of March, 1815. He is said to share the obstinacy of the inhabitants of his native province of Bretagne. He was educated at St. Cyr, like almost all the leading men in the French army, and he made his first essay in warfare in Algeria—that great school of arms in which the French officers have all graduated—where he served on the staff of Marshal Bugeaud from the year 1846.

It does not appear that the Algerian training has been as serviceable to French soldiers as might have been anticipated, it rather seems to have accustomed them to rely upon tactics that are useless in the presence of large and well-disciplined armies. In this particular the Algerian colony has certainly disappointed the hopes of the French, who expected that their newly acquired territory would be the nursing-place of officers for them, as India has been for England; but while England has never failed to find great generals ready to hand in the ranks of her Indian army, and has indeed, from the days of Wellington down to those of Napier of Magdala, depended for safety upon the heroes that guard her empire in the East, France has obtained from Algeria only dashing, daring soldiers almost innocent of technical skill.

But whatever the value of Algeria may be to France as a school for heroes, it did not afford any opportunity of distinction to the young Trochu, and his history is a blank until, in 1854, he was nominated to the staff of Marshal St. Arnaud, under whom he served in the early part of the Crimean War. Here again he was disappointed as far as his chance of acquiring fame was concerned,

for although after the death of Marshal St. Arnaud he was given the command of a division, yet it was not his fortune to take part in the decisive operations that humbled Russia and led to the triumph of the allied forces. However, he did his duty creditably, and stood high in the good graces of the Empire, in spite of his well known leaning to the house of Orleans.

In 1859 he was appointed to the charge of a division during the war against Austria in Lombardy, and here the fate that has prevented him from having much to do with decisive military operations manifested itself in a manner savouring somewhat of the ludicrous. It happened to be his appointed duty to dislodge the enemy from a strong position, and upon the receipt of orders he set about his work; but just as he put his forces in motion a blinding storm of rain and mist hid his opponents from his sight and him from them. When the storm cleared off the Austrians had disappeared, having themselves departed on business they thought more important, in utter unconsciousness of Trochu's intended attack. It is only fair to suppose that this incident must have been excessively provoking to the aspirant for military honour; but as he has now such a chance of acquiring fame as no man has had of late years, it may be considered that fortune has indulged him with the opportunity of showing his skill at last.

But even soldiers may become famous without drawing the sword, and a winning battle may be fought against a friend as easily as against an enemy. So General Trochu, in 1867, entered the lists of paper warfare, and wrote a clever book to prove that the army in which he bore an important command was worthless, and that the organisation to which he owed his rapid advancement was thoroughly unsound. He utterly condemned the military system of France, which was then in a state of transition, and he attacked everybody and everything concerned with the army, from the Emperor down to the corporals. This is the more remarkable, as he owed his professional advancement entirely to the Empire. Under the Orleanist monarchy he was made a captain in 1843 and in 1853 he was a captain still. But the Empire made him a colonel in 1853, a general in 1854, a commander of the Legion of Honour in 1855, a general of a division in 1859, and a grand officer of the Legion of Honour in 1861. Thus the man who had remained under the Monarchy he loved with only one step of promotion in thirteen years was advanced five times in eight years by the Empire he hated and this without once distinguishing himself in actual warfare.

Upon the breaking out of the war with Germany he was given the command of the land forces destined to co-operate with the Baltic fleet, but when the French were defeated at Reichshoffen he was recalled to take command of the army of Paris. In this capacity he has worked wonders; he has been incessantly occupied,—at first in receiving, organising, and dispatching troops to MacMahon,—latterly in drilling the raw levies from the provinces who are to do duty behind the walls of Paris in place of the trained soldiers who have fallen into the hands of the Prussians,—and all the time in completing, arming, and manning the fortifications.

In these duties his vigilance, assiduity and success have surprised his own countrymen, and excited the admiration of foreigners. The walls of Paris have been completed and protected with earthworks, the gates are built up, the moat filled, the surrounding country cleared of all that might serve as cover to the enemy, the outside forts that defend the walls repaired, armed and garrisoned, and, lastly, the vagrants have been expelled from Paris and nearly three months' provision accumulated for the defenders and the populace. The Francs-Tireurs and the Garde Mobile already begin to look like soldiers under the incessant training to which they are subjected; and as they will have the advantage of capital walls to fight behind, and the comforts of a large city at their back, they may do good service even against the overpowering hosts that the policy of Prussia sends into the field.

When the surrender of the Emperor was followed by his immediate deposition the presidency of the new Government was offered to General Trochu, and his acceptance of the office completed a singular example of the unanimity that a common danger has created among Frenchmen of all shades of opinion, for the present Government is composed of Republicans who always hated the Empire, and of Imperialists who have forgotten the favours they received from it, while it is presided over by an Orleanist partizan who cannot have much love for either party.

That this unanimity may lead to a speedy termination of the dreadful war which caused it, and, outlasting the strife, ensure future prosperity for the beautiful country of France, must be the present wish of every good man in the civilised world.



[HARD-HEARTED PLOTTING.]

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, DEAD OR ALIVE!

CHAPTER XV.

Would you find
Its moral wrought in human kind,
Turn straight to man, and in his fame
And forehead read "the Harpy's" name.
But no remorse, Barry Cornwall.

THE baronet, as avaricious as ever, even amid his matrimonial embarrassment, continued, sneeringly:

"I have long desired to add what is called the Sanders estate to my own—it is valued at ten thousand pounds, I have heard."

"More than that, Sir Jules."

"And if, by any legal means, the estate has been conveyed to Lady Julia, I shall claim it as mine, Mr. Sanders."

"I did not convey it to her, but to her son, and as he is of legal age he is entitled to do as he has done—doubtless at the desire of his mother. All is restored to me by him. I will read the note to you."

"CRESSY COURT, Nov. 16th, 1826."

"MR. DAVID SANDERS,—Accept this restoration of all that was your property, obtained from you by me, for my son, Jerome, while you believed him to be your son."

"I am now Lady de Cressy. I did not know that I was a married woman when I assumed your name. Of course, henceforth, between me and you there need be no further acquaintance."

"Go your way. I go mine."

"JULIA DE CRESSY."

"Ah, brief, and to the point," sneered the baronet. "Well, I shall let my lawyers settle the affair. Good-day, Mr. Sanders."

"Good-day, Sir Jules. I wish you much happiness in the possession of your wife and son. Thank Heaven, they are not mine!" said the old man, and then drove on.

"The curse of Cain and of Jezabel fall on both!" ejaculated the nettled baronet as he spurred his horse. "No marrying into the peerage for me at present. She may die ere long though, and suddenly. It shall not be my fault if she lives to be Countess of Barland, even if she has, for a time, gained the right to sign herself Julia de Cressy."

Not long after he halted and muttered:

"Oh, here I am, before the cottage of the beautiful wife of our formidable Captain Storme."

His groom rode up, and the baronet said:

"I am going in here. You will walk the horse

not far away, until I come out. What is that boy posting on the wall there, across the street?"

"A placard, offering a reward of fifteen thousand pounds for the capture of the great smuggler, Captain Storme, dead or alive, sir," replied the groom as the baronet dismounted.

"Ah! He is still at liberty?"

"Not a trace of him has been found since he evaded the pursuit at a late hour last night, not far from Cressy Hall, Sir Jules."

"He is a very bold fellow," remarked the baronet, glancing towards the windows of the cottage.

And at one of them he saw a very beautiful face looking carelessly at the boy as he posted the staring placard.

"Alas!" muttered the baronet as he walked towards the cottage; "she little dreams that reward is offered for the capture of her husband. Really, I enjoy this little secret, and it is a pleasure to reflect that my capital invention has sent the bearded monster hurriedly across the seas, seeking eagerly and most vainly for that very lovely lady I saw peeping from the window."

The cottage was a neat and handsome structure, recently taken by Mrs. Orania Hayland, whose acquaintance we are about to make.

Report said this lady was a widow, and she herself said that she had lost her husband years before, and that she had since lived by painting portraits and landscapes. The specimens of her art which she had on exhibition in the parlour of the cottage, and the few orders she had executed since her arrival in Little Ullsborough, proved that she possessed no ordinary talent in her profession.

She had resided in the town but a few weeks, and during that time her conduct and language had been perfect—even in the eyes and report of the most inveterate gossips.

She had but one servant, who had arrived with her. This servant—a staid, hard-featured woman, of rather masculine aspect—was undoubtedly a Frenchwoman, past middle-age, and evidently regarded by Mrs. Hayland more as a faithful friend than as a servant.

Looking by chance out of the cottage window, Mrs. Hayland, then in the room she used as a studio, saw the boy posting the placard. She glanced at it carelessly, and then saw Sir Jules as he opened the gate of the little flower garden before the cottage.

She knew little of the baronet, save that he was the great man of the neighbourhood, and she had seen too much of the world to heed the honied compliments he had lavished upon her beauty during the few interviews which had passed between them.

Of the many who had visited her—and it had become fashionable in Little Ullsborough to visit her—none could say that they had ever seen her alone.

The hard-faced woman—servant and friend—Irene Dugarre, had always been present.

"Sir Jules de Cressy is coming, Irene," she said, turning towards her attendant, who was engaged in mixing colours near the hearth.

"Sir Jules? I do not like him, my child. Do you?"

When alone together this woman always addressed Mrs. Hayland as "my child," and in French. When others were present she called her "Madame."

"He amuses me, Irene. But I do not like him. He has bad eyes. There—you hear the bell? He is at the door. Admit him."

"To this room?"

"To this room, as I am interested in this landscape."

Irene Dugarre left the room, and, while the lady continues to paint, we will briefly sketch her appearance.

Orania Hayland was indeed the beauty report declared her to be. Tall, graceful, erect, with the form of Venus and the dignity of Juno. Her eyes were large, black, lustrous, and soft. Only when animated they became flashing and sparkling. Her complexion was an exquisite blending of the rose and lily; her lips arched and pouting, and of a charming vermilion; her mouth faultless; her hair soft, glossy, raven black, and wavy; the contour of her head most beautiful. In form and many prominent features she bore an extraordinary resemblance to Lady Julia, though the hair of the latter was a pure golden colour, and that of Mrs. Hayland a purplish black.

But in the beauty of Mrs. Hayland there was a freshness and maiden-like radiance of youth which time had slightly dimmed in Lady Julia.

As Sir Jules entered the studio he bowed and fixed his eyes upon her with more of keen scrutiny than she had ever remarked in them before.

She greeted him respectfully, as his rank exacted, but with no fawning air.

"You do indeed very much resemble Lady de Cressy—ah!" he said.

"Lady de Cressy!" she exclaimed as he suddenly paused. "Is there a Lady de Cressy? You have told me you were unmarried, Sir Jules. You are jesting."

"Oh, the gossip has not reached you?"

"You are my first visitor to-day, Sir Jules."

"Ah! I may as well tell you, then. Ahem! I think I stated that I lost—oh, no, I did not—the fact is, it has been a subject too sad to be

spoken of, Mrs. Hayland. Some years ago I was separated from my wife by remarkable circumstances of which I need not speak now," said the baronet, smiling blandly, and stroking his beard. "In fact, I have for years believed Lady de Cressy to be dead. Last night—imagine my astonishment, Mrs. Hayland—my lost wife made her appearance, alive and well, at Cressy Hall."

"You were delighted to meet her again after so long a separation, and especially believing she was dead, Sir Jules?"

"Ah, charmed! You should have witnessed our meeting. It was very romantic, I assure you."

"Fortunate wife," said Mrs. Hayland, in a sad voice, her eyes swimming in tears.

Sir Jules, watching her keenly, knew well the cause of these sudden tears. He knew she was contrasting her own sorrow of separation from her husband with the happiness she imagined had fallen to Lady de Cressy.

"Ahem! Such reunions, such joyful reunions, seldom are the fate of separated husbands and wives, Mrs. Hayland; did I know of a pair so separated it would be a joy to aid each in the search for the other."

His cold, cruel eyes were marking each feature of the beautiful, innocent face as it was raised uneexpectingly towards him. He saw the warm blush come and go in the lovely cheeks, and the moisture of deep and scarcely restrained emotion dimming the lustre of the dark, magnificent eyes.

She felt weak, she knew not why, and, casting aside her pencil, seemed striving to overcome her faintness.

"I have heard, Mrs. Hayland, that you cling fondly to the memory of your husband."

"Ah, sir!"

"Pray pardon me if I touch a tender wound, Mrs. Hayland. Did he die—ahem—when you were with him?"

"No, Sir Jules; I do not know that he is dead."

"Is it possible? And so charming a lady is forced to live single, struggling I may say," he remarked as he glanced with feigned compassion around the studio, "because she is not sure that her husband is dead. How very unfortunate."

"I have no desire to be otherwise than I am, Sir Jules—that is, if my husband is dead," she said, coldly.

"That is very unfortunate for all unmarried gentlemen, Mrs. Hayland. Have you a portrait of your husband?"

"I finished painting one of him yesterday, Sir Jules. Irene, turn the front of Captain Hayland's portrait to the light."

Irene obeyed in the grim silence she always observed when visitors were present, and the baronet beheld a life-size portrait of the face and bust of the lost husband.

Sir Jules almost started as his eyes first met it. It represented the husband without the heavy beard the baronet so well remembered, and the hair was of brilliant auburn, unlike the dyed locks of the disguised smuggler; but there was no mistaking the clear, bold, frank, blue eyes, the broad, generous brow, the clear-cut, aquiline nose, and the haughty, self-reliant poise of the head.

At a glance the baronet recognised Captain Storme in this splendid portrait of Mrs. Hayland's husband.

After pretending to study it for several minutes, he said:

"Mrs. Hayland, I am sure that I have seen the original of this portrait. Was not his first name Robert?"

"It was! Oh, Sir Jules! when and where did you see him—the person in your mind? he may have been my dear husband."

Her agitation was sudden, instantaneous, and excessive. Her frame trembled violently—she became very pale, she seemed about to sink upon her knees at the feet of the baronet. It was plain that Orania adored with a passion that was almost a frenzy the memory of her lost husband.

Irene Dugarre, darting a bitter glance at the baronet, advanced hurriedly to her mistress, and said:

"Madame, calm yourself. It is simply impossible that this gentleman can ever have met Captain Hayland."

"Really," remarked Sir Jules, who cared nothing for any anguish that his words might inflict in his desire to gain the confidence of the poor lady, "many things are more probable than many persons, especially impertinent persons, suppose. Mrs. Hayland will excuse me from pursuing a conversation in which a domestic seems to have a desire to share."

"She is my faithful friend, as well as servant, Sir Jules. Irene Dugarre has been with me since my infancy."

"Indeed!" thought the baronet. "In that case I must take care not to irritate this old, hard-faced woman. She may be bribed to give me most valuable information."

He favoured Irene with a patronising nod. He even condescended to smile upon her. He was weighing her worth in his mind. Irene Dugarre had already weighed his.

"This old woman may have a secret worth purchasing," thought Sir Jules as he smoothed his sandy beard and stared at her.

"This man is a cold-hearted rascal, and is here for some bad purpose," thought Irene as she assumed a face rigid as stone.

"I beg you to resume the conversation, Sir Jules. My husband's name was Robert Hayland."

"Ah, perhaps a mere coincidence, Mrs. Hayland. You have never told me, and pray don't tell me your first name until I have spoken."

"No, I have never told you my Christian name, sir."

"You are known by all in this town and county simply as Mrs. O. Hayland. Now O may stand for Olivia, or Orletta, or something else."

"Very true, Sir Jules."

"You are sure that no one here knows what O represents before your name?"

"No one except myself and Irene, Sir Jules."

"Nor do I, Mrs. Hayland. Yet the Robert Hayland in my memory may have mentioned your name when he spoke to me of his lost wife—"

"Ah, he had a lost wife!"

"Yes, madam; but that fact is in itself nothing."

"The name he told you belonged to his lost wife?"

demanding Mrs. Hayland, eagerly.

"A very uncommon name, madam. I have never met any one in all my life of the same name. It was Orania."

"My name, my name, Sir Jules! Oh, he whom you met must have been my husband! Tell me!" she exclaimed, "when and where did you meet a man whose name was Robert Hayland, who had lost his wife, whose lost wife's first name was Orania? My husband's name was Robert Hayland. We were lost to each other by a great calamity. My first name is Orania. Tell me!"

She grasped both of his cold, soft hands in hers. Her eloquent, beseeching eyes were raised to his. She had sunk upon her knees. He appeared as the god of her fate to her bruised heart. The flush of emotion had deepened the rich bloom upon her cheek, and the moist, crimson lips were parted as her breath came and went in gasps, in sighs, in eager ejaculations.

Oh, hard heart, that did not then relent! Oh, fiendish brain! ever cool and crisp, crushing with icy mercilessness! plotting even now to over-reach this fond, beauteous, bereaved, imploring wife!

"My dear madam," replied the baronet, wishing this angelic lady were his wife, hoping he might have no cause over to suspect that she was his daughter—since then she could not be his wife—"until I am convinced, beyond all doubt, that the person in my mind was not your husband, I cannot tell you when and where I saw him."

Cunning fiend! He was playing the sharp rapier of his shrewdness around the heart of this fond wife, seeking for a chance to impose a lie upon it!

"What proofs can I produce that can convince you of that, Sir Jules? How can I prove that I was his wife?—that he was my Robert? Have pity! Your words are couched in terrible phrase, Sir Jules. You cannot tell me when or where you saw him, unless first convinced that he was not my husband? Under what dreadful circumstances! Oh, Sir Jules! pity! pity the agony of a wife who adores the memory of her husband!"

"My dear madam, the person in my mind gave me some history of his life; and were you to give me a brief narration of your own, I should at once know whether you and he were ever husband and wife."

"There is nothing in my life that can bring a blush to my cheek, Sir Jules, yet the recital would pain me greatly. I should break down in telling my sorrows. Yet, well—my maiden name, the name I bore until Robert Hayland married me, was Orania Dugarre."

"Dugarre! The name of your domestic!"

"I was her adopted child, Sir Jules. I do not know who my parents were, Sir Jules!" replied Orania, covering her face with her hands, and sobbing bitterly.

"Heavens!" was the mental exclamation of the baronet. "She does not know who her parents were. She may be my daughter. In that case Jerome is not my son. There's comfort in that, though I shall regret to discover that this charming beauty is my child."

The baronet had no scruples in thus torturing the heart of a bereaved wife. He had ordered Barellint to hasten to Aiytown, the birthplace of Lady Julia, the town in which Emily Sanders and Julia had become mothers, to search out all that could be learned relative to the birth of their children. But his ravenous eagerness to penetrate the mystery could not await the patient and plodding investigations of the lawyer, investigations which would certainly require weeks of delay.

He would appease the greediness of his brain even at the sacrifice of this fond and bleeding heart. He had no pity for Orania Hayland. But Irene Dugarre, the hard-faced, warm-hearted woman, had. Irene threw her strong arms around her sobbing mistress, and, raising her to her feet, held her to her faithful bosom, saying:

"Sir Jules, I will speak for this lady, who has been my adopted child, and who is now my mistress and friend."

Irene spoke in her native tongue, and gazed steadily at the baronet.

"Good!" he thought. "I am like Moses. I have smitten the rock in the desert, and sparkling streams are beginning to gush forth—streams of mysteries revealed. For a shrewd investigator of women's secrets commend me always to Sir Jules de Cressy."

He smiled, bowed, and stroked his beard.

CHAPTER XVI.

Yet is the tale, brief though it be, as strange,
As full, methinks, of wild and wondrous change,
As any sung of old in hall or bower,
To minstrel harp at midnight's watching hour.
Percy Reliques.

IRENE DUGARRE began as follows:

"Nearly, or perhaps quite twenty-two years ago, a lady, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and very beautiful, though greatly wasted in frame, came to where I lived, not many miles from Paris. Night was closing in when she stopped before the door of our cottage, and asked for food and shelter. We were poor people—I mean my husband and me—but we had warm hearts. Perhaps we had warm hearts because we were not rich, like you, Sir Jules; so we willingly took the poor lady in—her and her little baby-girl; the babe a few months old, and the lady deranged."

"Ah, the lady deranged!" said the baronet, with a feigned carelessness. "How did you know that she was a lady, and deranged?"

"We knew by her appearance that she was a lady—of a class far above us, Sir Jules. We knew she was deranged because she sang sad and wild ballads in English and in French."

"Oh! she spoke French?"

"Yes, and very well. Her manners, her gestures, her rambling speech, proved that she was not in her right mind. She would look wildly at the babe in her arms, and cry out, in a sad way:

"Oh, I made a mistake—a terrible mistake! and when I find Clarence I will go back. But Clarence first—Clarence first! I must find Clarence—cruel Clarence!"

"What mistake she had made, or what she meant by staring so wildly at her babe when she said those words, I do not know."

"Clarence?"

"That was the name, Sir Jules."

"Clarence who?"

"She never spoke of that. She spoke but one name, and very often she called it out fiercely, too: 'Clarence! Clarence! cruel Clarence! I will find you! I must find you—I will—I will! Oh, cruel Clarence!'"

"She was quoting from Shakespeare," said the baronet, hiding a sneer. "I think she may have said something about 'false Clarence! perjured Clarence!' eh? She was an actress gone mad no doubt."

He added in thought:

"I wish she had stayed mad as all Bedlam. Find Clarence! Yes, she has found Clarence with a vengeance! May she die speedily!"

"I do not know who or what she was, Sir Jules; but I know the name that belonged to Clarence."

"Ha! you do? You have just said you did not. Don't lie, woman," said the baronet, coarsely, and surprised.

"I said she did not speak the name that belonged to Clarence," said Irene, whose steady gray eyes were studying the baronet with a keenness he did not suspect. "She wrote the name."

"Ha! Wrote it?"

Irene let her eyes sink suddenly to the floor. She was getting a trap with her shrewd woman wit. So she gazed down at the carpet with eyes almost closed, and continued:

"I should not have remembered the name if she had not taken a piece of charcoal from our hearth, after a long silence, and written it in full, in great black letters, upon the white wall of our little bedroom, which we were sitting in. Neither I nor my husband could read them; and for a long time afterward the letters remained in the privacy of our bedroom, a riddle to us, with no meaning in them. No one ever entered our bedroom except my husband and myself. I will presently tell you how we learned what the letters meant. They are there yet, on the white wall, in great black lines, as she wrote them, if the wall exists. The name was Clarence Vereton."

As she uttered this name Irene sprang the trap she had set. That is, she flashed her eyes, hard and keen, wide open, and fixed them sternly upon the face of Sir Jules.

The trap caught something. Despite his great and vigilant control over the muscles of his face, the features of the baronet twitched, the nostrils and the eyelids quivered, the lips were compressed; the slightest agitation imaginable, yet the keen-eyed Frenchwoman detected it, and remembered it as a strong link in the chain of her suspicion.

Sir Jules wished he had not forced this recital, which seemed strangely like an accusation.

So the false name was inscribed yonder in France upon the walls of poverty, in great black letters, by the hand of a crazy woman, a woman made mad by his baseness. It was an accusing ghost of one of his many crimes, starting up from the past to confront him, but he faced it boldly.

"Clarence Vereton? I have never heard that name before," he said, quickly; and down went the lie a million miles to the father of lies below, for his Satanic admiration. "And did she stay long at your cottage, my good woman?"

"Cottage! It was but a cabin of earth and stone, not worthy the name of cottage, though we tried to keep it, and did keep it clean and white within with the paint of poverty—whitewash. No; the lady remained but one night—more likely not all of one night—for when we awoke on the next morning at day-dawn, she was gone."

"And you never knew how nor where?"

"No, sir. We think she perished as she wandered along the slippery banks of the Seine, for we found there, just at the water's edge, half in and half out, the faded scarf she had worn—a silken scarf, of very fine material, blue and scarlet. There were three words embroidered in gold thread upon the scarf. We could not read them then. The words were: 'Clarence to Julia.'"

Sir Jules did not start at this. He had increased his vigilance. He had recognised that his mind was being led through the dark past of Julia Sterlington's wanderings, and that his sins were lying in ambush for him, ready to leap at his heart, grim and weird, and he had made his face like rock in its expression of indifference.

Yet he remembered well that he had given such a scarf to Julia at the bridal he once thought was a sham—a mere triumph of his illimitable baseness. And though the remembrance was an accusation, he regarded the revelation only as a link of evidence that Lady de Cressy had not utterly lied.

"Very sad and romantic, my good woman," he said. "Continue."

"No doubt she was drowned," resumed Irene, gravely. "We never heard of her afterwards. But she left her babe in our bed—a poor bed of straw, Sir Jules, but the best we had. This lady is that babe grown to a beautiful woman."

She placed her large and honest hands tenderly upon the beauteous bowed head, whose charming face was hidden in her faithful bosom, and gently smoothed the glossy, wavy, jet-black and silken hair, as Irene Dugarre, good heart, had done a thousand times when Orania was a child.

"Aw, really!" said the baronet, as if amazed. "And you, my dear Mrs. Hayland, are the child of the poor, deranged lady. Wonderful! Not wonderful that you are the child of the mad lady!—I was prepared for that; but really amazing that this very proper person, Irene Dugarre, did not send you to—ah! the Foundling Hospital. Clever, charitable creature, I admire her."

"Send the poor, deserted babe to the Foundling Hospital, when, poor as we were, and with no child of our own, we were able to take care of it!" exclaimed Irene, no match for the heartless cunning of the baronet just then. "Never! We adopted the little, deserted darling! We accepted her as a gift from Heaven, and so she has ever been. Bless her! Heaven pity her!" added Irene, proudly, fondly, beseechingly, pressing kisses fast and strong upon the bowed and beauteous head, as a loving mother caresses an idolised babe.

"Ho, this woman will be a tigress to defend my goddess of beauty," thought the unmoved baronet, biting his tongue, and wishing it was his bosom that lovely face was hiding in, his kisses those that rained upon her hair.

"She lived, she grew, she thrived, and a kind priest—an old and a good man he was—educated her, so that in time she learned to read and write; and the time came when she read to me and my husband the name the poor, demented lady had written on our bed-room wall—'Clarence Vereton'—and in time she taught us to read it too. 'Clarence Vereton.' Was it the name of her father? And was it her mother who wrote that name? I do not know; I only know that to serve her and to make her happy, I would die a thousand cruel deaths."

Sir Jules knew now that the unscrupulous lawyer, Barellint, if he learned anything in that far-away town of Aiytown, in the north of England, would find that Lady Julia had not spoken falsely. He believed, too, that this unfortunate lady, the wife of the fugitive smuggler, was the daughter of David Sanders and David's dead wife, Emily.

But Sir Jules had no thought of revealing this belief. David Sanders might go childless to the grave for all he cared. Lady de Cressy might discover that Orania Hayland was her niece, if she could. Of these secrets he, Sir Jules, would be jealous as of his life, and especially would he never tell Orania that her daring and adored husband was alive and well, speeding towards Scotland with the stride and heart of a lion that seeks his mate.

He smiled behind his white, soft hand, and stroked his yellowish beard triumphantly.

Irene continued, animatedly:

"We named her Orania. My husband made the name in his own mind, I believe. At least, I have never known or heard of the name elsewhere. She grew to be a beauty. My husband ventured a good sum in a lottery, and drew a great prize. Oh, if he had drawn a blank we should have perished homeless. But he drew a great prize, for people as poor as we were. He drew fifty thousand francs—a fortune. We sold our little cottage, and moved to Paris. We spent our money for this child—dear Orania—Orie, our darling."

"Orie!" thought the baronet. "I suppose that is a kind of love name—an abbreviation for Orania. I must remember it. Some day I may call this charmer of my soul, 'Orie! darling Orie!'"

"We prospered in Paris. We employed the best teachers for our adopted child. She soon displayed a talent for painting. We did all we could to develop that gift. It was well we did, else now we might be in poverty. In Paris we became acquainted with a sea-captain, who owned the vessel he commanded. He was an Englishman, named Robert Hayland."

"Good! We are now in the wake of my sea-monster!" thought the baronet, twirling his dainty thumbs in feigned indifference.

"A tall—very tall—but magnificent-looking man he was—frank, handsome, free-hearted, and fascinating. Orania loved him at first sight. She was a woman in form and in mind, though but sixteen years old, or about that, when she married Captain Hayland; and he was ten years older, perhaps more, but he seemed far more youthful—he was so frank, and brave, and handsome—"

"Oh, well! do not waste time in describing him. I may have seen him myself, you forget. Go on," said Sir Jules, testily, and adding to himself: "This foolish old woman will always be recalling the accursed image of the marine monster to the mind of his wife. I intend that my image shall take the place of my absent friend, Robert Hayland, alias Captain Childeric Storme. This old woman must be got rid of."

"He was a man in a thousand, as the saying is, Sir Jules, and Orania loved him. He adored her."

"I can believe that," thought the baronet, "after what I saw and heard last night." "She became Mrs. Hayland," continued Irene. "He took us all by storm, I may say—it was his way. Besides, my husband and I liked him. He was very liberal; he had excellent recommendations—I don't know from whom; in truth, we did not care to inquire. We were satisfied with him as he appeared—a well-to-do sea-captain and ship-owner. I believed he was a man of honour then, and I believe so yet. Well, the marriage took place more than six years ago, and Captain Robert, as we loved to call him, purchased a fine house, and there he lived with us several months. Well, one day, Captain Robert told us he would be obliged to leave us for a few weeks on a voyage—only a few weeks, he said. He went, and we have never heard of him since."

Mrs. Hayland sobbed again at these last words, and even Irene's hard face worked with restrained tears.

"He was a sailor," said the baronet, carelessly; and sailors are very unstable husbands."

And that was all his pity! A sneer, a scoff! And yet he knew the deceived husband—the husband he had deceived with a cunning lie—was straining every sinew of his athletic frame, yearning with every fibre of his great, generous, and faithful heart, far on the road to the Scottish coast, eager to brave the surges of the stormy Atlantic, and the murderous clime of the sickly Indies, to find this unhappy and adored wife, who had never doubted his faith, never! who had clung to his memory with a devoted, enduring heart year after year, hoping, hoping, ever embracing him in her dreams, bemoaning his loss when awake, even as the bold sailor did hers.

"Really, that was a clever invention of mine," mused the wily baronet as he stroked his beard.

"That imagined diary—club foot—picture-dealer,

and all that. Aha! I hope the marine monster may never return to growl at me."

But he will return, my dainty, white-handed baronet! What then? Do you think he will satisfy his wrath with a growl?

"We do not know that we have heard of him, nor from him," continued Irene, taking no notice of the baronet's sneer at sailors. "Yet we have received a message that purported to come from him. I may speak of that presently. We only know that we have never seen him since he left us to be gone but a few weeks, and it's more than five years ago."

"Ah!"

"A few months after Captain Robert left us, his daughter was born—"

"Ho! there was a child born, was there? I had not heard—I mean that I had not imagined—"

He paused abruptly. The keen eyes of the sharp-witted Frenchwoman were upon him suddenly.

"The person you have in your mind, named Robert Hayland," she asked, "did not tell you that he had a child as well as a lost wife?"

Sir Jules was as quick-witted as she. He replied, smiling:

"Ah, no. Perhaps he was unaware of that—if he was Captain Robert—as you say the child was born after his departure. No; he said nothing to me of a child."

Very true. The smuggler did not know that a child had been born to him after he left his Orania.

"Would you recognise the writing of the person in your mind were you to see it, Sir Jules?" Irene asked, suddenly.

Not he, for he had never seen a line of the smuggler's writing in all his life; did not even know that Captain Storme could write; thought it very probable that he could not; was in his opinion just such a man as could only sign his name with a cross. He did not say this, but replied, instantly:

"Perhaps I might. I do not say that I can, you observe. Have you any of his writing?"

Mrs. Hayland drew from her bosom a small locket, opened it with trembling hands, took from it a note several times tightly folded, and smoothing out the note placed it in the hand of the baronet.

Sir Jules read the following lines, traced in a free, bold, and dashing hand:

"Brest Harbour, France, August 9, 1820."

"DEAR WIFE, MY ORANIA.—Have just arrived off Brest. May have to sail for Genoa in forty-eight hours after you receive this. Hasten to Brest. Should my ship, the Rainbow, have sailed when you arrive, follow me to Genoa, where I will await you. In Brest stop at the Hôtel d'Aigle, and if I be not there my friend, Captain Basant, will take charge of you. Do not fail to come if you love your ever-faithful husband, ROBERT HAYLAND."

Sir Jules, to gain time, travelled to the blank side of this letter—which had travelled to Mrs. Hayland in an envelope—and pretended to examine that.

There were a few blurred and blotted letters upon the blank side of the note, but he could make nothing of them.

"Aw! I think I have seen this hand before," said he, feeling his way as a man treads on thin ice over deep water.

"We were familiar with the signature merely," remarked Irene, "for that we had often seen him sign to various papers, and it is exactly like that upon Mrs. Hayland's marriage certificate."

"Ha! you suspect this letter is a forgery!" exclaimed Sir Jules, examining the letter more carefully.

"We did not when we received it. We do now. You noticed the blurred letters on the back of the letter? Can you decipher them?"

Sir Jules could make nothing of them.

"They are upside down, or in a blot, if they are letters," he said.

"Suppose, Sir Jules," said Irene, "that a person who signs his name in a bold, heavy, and yet peculiar hand, having just written his name, incautiously places over and upon the wet signature a sheet of paper and written to another person? Of course the signature beneath the paper will be blotted and inverted, so to speak, upon the paper he writes on. Hold the back of that letter to the mirror there, and see what you can make out of the reflection."

"True. I will try," said the baronet, rising, and doing as he was told.

The reflection was also a blur and a blot, but Sir Jules felt his heart leap to his throat as he made out clearly part of a name and signature with which he was well acquainted. Thus:

"Mark Renf—"

The latter part of the signature was a great black blur, shapeless, but the baronet knew it all.

"Mark Renfrow!" he thought, and coughed repeatedly to quiet his startled nerves. "It seems he has a finger in every pie. Now, what could he have been after in this affair? Yes, and I detect now his

peculiar hand disguised in this pretended Hayland letter."

The baronet was a man who thought fast and logically at the same time. He deduced instantly thus:

"Hayland is undoubtedly Childeric Storme.

"Childeric Storme has very formidable claims to the title and estates of the late Baronet de Cressy.

"Mark Renfrew is next heir-at-law after Childeric Storme, if Storme leave no heirs.

"Mark Renfrew knows that Robert Hayland is Childeric Storme.

"Mark Renfrew, therefore, has learned that which Storme seems not to know—that Storme has a child. Though a daughter she can inherit—the females of the De Cressy family being entitled, male heirs failing, to inherit all but the bare title of Baronet de Cressy.

"Therefore, Mark Renfrew plots to cut off Storme and his family. No doubt he would then plot to cut me off!"

Sir Jules thought all this, and, resuming his seat, he stroked his beard—which action, we have said, in him was like the coiling of a serpent about to strike—and said:

"The name, if it be a name—which I doubt—might be imagined to be Mark, Merle, Ranf, or Roup, or something of that kind. I never knew any one of that or a similar name. Mere scribble, I am sure."

Irene Dugarre had been setting another trap for the wary baronet. She gazed at him with a steady, penetrating eye, and said, suddenly like a pistol's crack:

"Colonel Mark Renfrew!"

(To be continued.)

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

EARLY in November the Burtons went back to their London house; and Edna, freed from Georgie's almost constant society, was looking forward to a long, delightful winter alone with Roy. But Georgie decreed it otherwise. It was of no use to be engaged and not have her lover at her disposal when she wanted him, so she kept up a continual siege, until Mrs. Churchill signified her willingness, and even her wish, to spend at least a portion of the winter in London, where she could have the best of medical advice for her eyes, that being one of Georgie's strongest arguments.

And thither in December he went with his mother and Miss Overton, and his mother's waiting-maid. It was late in the afternoon when they arrived and took possession of their handsome house; and, as in duty bound, Roy called upon his bride-elect. She did not know of his arrival in town, and seemed surprised and a little flurried at seeing him. She had not expected them for a week or more, she said as she came in to greet him; and all through the interview she seemed confused and absent-minded, as if her thoughts were elsewhere than with her lover. And they were. Up in her own chamber, on a bed improvised from a lounge, lay a little crippled child, waiting and longing for sister's return, and wishing so much that she could see the gentleman whom Georgie was to marry.

Annie had been with Georgie for a week, revelling in luxury and elegance such as she had never dreamed of, and appearing perfectly happy in her sister's society.

Georgie felt shocked at the great change perceptible in Annie. It was not so much a wasting of the flesh as a spiritualisation of the whole face, which fairly shone, as the faces of angels are supposed to shine, and which looked as if its owner was already abjuncted from the things pertaining to earth, and was realising the joys of Heaven.

"Tired—so tired all the time—that's all," Annie had said, when, with a gush of tears, Georgie bent over her and asked what ailed her darling.

Tired—so tired—that was all the child complained of; but it was evident to those who knew her that she was rapidly passing away. Georgie saw it, too, and her tears fell like rain as she sat by Annie's couch, and listened to the sweet voice telling of her joy at seeing sister again, and how she had longed for her coming.

"And you are to be married, Georgie?" Annie said; "John will be married, too. He has brought Maude to see me, and I loved her so much at once, I am glad for John, who is to have her always. It will be nicer then with somebody to talk to and look at besides Luna. But, Georgie, sister, mayn't I stay part of the time with you when you are married to Mr. Leighton? I should be so happy there, seeing you every day."

There was something very pleading in the tone of the voice, and Georgie's lip quivered as she replied: "Yes, darling, you shall. I'll have a nice room

fitted up next to mine for you, and I'll call it Annie's Room, and put in it so many pretty things."

And then, by way of amusing the child, Georgie went on to tell how she would furnish that room which was to be Annie's, picturing such a fairy-land that Annie's eyes shone like stars as she clasped her hands together, exclaiming:

"It will be so nice. Oh, Georgie, you won't forget, will you, to let me come?"

Then she talked of Roy, and asked Georgie to bring him there some day; Georgie promised that she would, but without in the least meaning what she said. She was very morbid upon the subject of an interview between Annie and her lover, so long as he was her lover. Once his wife, she should not care so much, she thought, and she was really in earnest in thinking that Annie should spend a portion of the time with her. Roy knew there was such a child, that in some way she was connected with the family, and that she called Georgie her sister. That was all he knew. He had never evinced any special interest in her, and Georgie did not mean that he should, until she chose to have him.

So when Annie asked next if she might go to London and spend a few days at Mrs. Burton's, Georgie hesitated and calculated the chances of Roy's seeing her there, deciding finally that she was safe, and promising Annie that she should go if John were willing. He was willing, and was more friendly and cordial with Georgie than he had ever been since her engagement. He always liked her best when she was interested in Annie, and he assented readily to the visit. Georgie appointed the next day to come for the little girl. But one of the sinking moods to which the child was subject came on to prevent the visit, which was deferred until December, when it at last occurred, and Annie had been a week with Georgie, intending to stay a few days longer, when Roy suddenly made his appearance, and the visit was at an end.

Georgie could scarcely define to herself why she so dreaded that Roy should see her sister, but when she received his card, and knew he was waiting for her in the parlour below, her first impulse was to bring him up at once to her room, and have the interview over. With that impulse there came over her a feeling that she could not stand by Roy and see him talking so kindly to Annie as he would, without suffering such pangs of remorse and anguish as she was not willing voluntarily to incur. And so she merely said to him, when he asked her if she were quite well, and remarked that she looked pale and tired:

"I am a little worn. I have had Annie, my adopted sister, you know, here for a week or more, and as she is a great invalid, it has kept me closer in my room than was good for my health. How is your mother? and are you comfortable? though, of course you are. I went through the rooms the other day, and almost envied you."

She was talking very fast for the sake of driving all remembrance of Annie from Roy's mind, but the *rites* did not succeed, for as soon as she ceased Roy proposed taking herself and Annie for a drive to the park.

"It will do you good," he said, "and the little sick girl, too. I've never seen her, you know, and I would like to make the acquaintance of all my relatives."

He spoke playfully, and Georgie's face flushed for a moment with pleasure at his allusion to their projected marriage, then grew pale again and troubled as she declined the invitation both for herself and Annie. The latter was not well enough to bear the ride, she said (forgetting that she had promised to take her there that very afternoon), while she felt it her duty to stay and amuse the child who was so fond of her. And so Roy, thinking how self-sacrificing she was, and liking her the better for it, bade her a more affectionate adieu than usual, and drove his mother and Edna to the park that afternoon, never dreaming of the bitter disappointment which filled poor Annie's heart when told in Georgie's most honeyed tones that it would be impossible for her to fulfil the promise of a ride as her head was aching so hard, and she felt too ill to go out.

The largest, handsomest doll was bought next morning as a peace-offering to Annie, and a panacea to Georgie's conscience; then, as Georgie found that she owed a call, and would pass directly by John's house, she suggested that Annie should go with her and see Luna, while she was making her call.

"You can come back with me if you like," she said, smoothing the silken hair, and thinking how she would manage to prevent the coming back in case Annie took a fancy to do so.

But Annie did not; her own home and easy-chair looked so pleasant to her, and Luna was so glad to have her home again, that she at once expressed a wish to stay, and so Georgie bade her a loving good-

by, and drove back directly, leaving the call, which had existed only in her imagination, unmade!

That night Georgie went to the opera with Roy and Miss Overton, and occupied the most conspicuous seat in the box; she was more admired and commented upon than any lady in the audience, as she sat flushed, brilliant, and beautiful, with diamonds on her neck and arms and in her flowing hair. Roy was sufficiently attentive, and, proud of her position as his betrothed, she carried herself regally, and felt a very queen as on her lover's arm she made her way through the crowd which came surging out after the opera was over.

Close behind her as she emerged into the open air came another figure—the figure of a man, who all through the opera had, himself unseen, watched her glowing beauty with a look upon his bad face which, had Georgie seen it, would have driven her to the verge of insanity. But Georgie did not see it, or dream of the shadow following her up so fast just when her sky was brightest and her triumph seemingly sure. She did think of Annie when she reached her room and saw the little bed where the child had lain, and the thinking of her kept her from praying, as was her nightly custom.

She could read her Bible as usual, and not know, when she had finished, a single word she had read; but she could not pray with Annie's face before her, as it looked when told that the park must be given up, and she lay long awake trying to quiet her conscience by thinking how much she would do for Annie when once she was Mrs. Roy Leighton, with no fear of anything either in the past or future. She did not go to see Annie, as she had promised to do. Her time was so occupied with Mrs. Churchill and Roy, and all her fashionable duties, besides which Mrs. Burton was about to give a party, which, for costliness and elegance, was to surpass anything which had been or would be seen in London that winter.

Maude, on whose taste and skill in many matters both Mrs. Burton and Georgie relied, had obtained a vacation of a few days, and was busy with Georgie's dress, which was being made in the house where the ladies could give it their hourly inspection if they chose. Edna, who was to be included in the invitations sent to Worth House, was also eager and expectant, and supremely happy in the beautiful gauzy fabric which Mrs. Churchill had presented to her, and which was being made by a fashionable modiste. It would be Edna's first glimpse of London society, as seen at a brilliant party, and, though she dreaded it somewhat, she was looking forward to it with eager anticipation, and was frequently in earnest consultation with Maude, who, like herself, was flushed, excited, and happy.

The cards were already issued, and but two days intervened before the appointed night, when Georgie suddenly appeared at Worth House and asked to see Miss Overton. She was very pale, and there were traces of great mental agitation and distress in her manner as she proceeded at once to her errand. A messenger had just come saying that Annie was much worse, dangerously ill. John had written and desired to see Georgie as soon as possible, while he, too, joined in the sick child's request, and wished his sister to bring several little delicacies which he named, and which he could not well procure.

"It is impossible for me to go, with my dress and everything in its present condition, and the party to-morrow night," Georgie said; "neither can I spare Maude, and as it does seem necessary that John should have some woman there besides old Luna, I came to see if you would be kind enough to go over just for to-day. You can, of course, return to-morrow, when Annie will, I am sure, be better. John is easily frightened, and has, no doubt, exaggerated the case. Will you go, Miss Overton, if Mrs. Churchill can spare you?"

She was holding Edna's hand, and squeezing it affectionately; in fact, she had held and squeezed it ever since she commenced talking. She was so urgent and anxious that Edna consented, feeling a genuine pleasure in the prospect of seeing again the little girl who had been her pupil for a short time, and in whom she had been so much interested.

"Thank you so much. You don't know how you have relieved me, for I know you will do everything that is necessary; Mrs. Churchill says you are a capital nurse," Georgie said, kissing Edna twice, and promising to send the carriage round at once with the articles John had ordered.

Edna had never seen Annie since she left, and without a thought of how the fatigue and watching in a sick-room would tell upon her good looks the ensuing night, she got herself in readiness, and in less than an hour was standing in John Heyford's house, explaining to him why she had come instead of Georgie.

"Not coming? Sent you in her place?" he repeated, seeming more angry and excited than Edna had ever before seen him. "She is a hard, unnatural woman, and if Heaven permit her to prosper I shall

lose my faith in everything I have been taught most to respect," he said, grinding his teeth together as he uttered the words, which seemed almost like a curse upon the proud girl, who at that very moment was trying on her party dress and calculating the effect to be produced upon her guests when she appeared before them in her costly and becoming robes.

Still she did not forget Annie, and all the day long there was a dull, heavy pain in her heart, a foreboding of evil, which at last prompted her to tell Maude of the note from John, and to ask her as a favour to go herself and bring news of the sick girl. It was the first Maude had heard of Annie's danger, and she opened her eyes wide with wonder and surprise as she asked:

"Why not go yourself, Georgie? Not that I am unwilling, but Annie wants you. Neither Miss Overton nor myself will answer the purpose."

"I can't," Georgie replied. "I might ride over this evening, if I were sure of coming back, but, once there, Annie and John both would insist upon my staying through the night, and you know how loss of sleep affects my nerves and spirits."

"And looks," Maude added, sarcastically, knowing that this was the real key to the whole matter.

Georgie must be fresh and bright for the next evening's party; she could not afford to peril her beauty by nursing a sick child who wanted her, so she made herself believe that there was no immediate danger threatening the little girl, and stayed at home, sending Maude in her stead, with injunctions to pass the night, if necessary, but to send back a correct account of Annie's condition, and excuse her to John as far as practicable.

"More comfortable, but very sorry not to see you. I shall pass the night here, as will Miss Overton, also. Please get word to Mrs. Churchill."

This was Maude's message, which Georgie read aloud to Roy, whose interest in Annie's illness arose more from the fact that it had taken and was keeping Miss Overton away; and, handsome and elegant as were his rooms at Worth House, they were not quite the same without the hired companion.

"I hope Miss Overton will not think of sitting up to-night. She does not seem very strong, and I want her to be as fresh as possible for the party," he said, and his manner betrayed even more annoyance than his words.

There was a threatening look in Georgie's eyes, and a little impatience in her voice, as she said:

"I suppose I might and ought to have gone myself, and so spared Miss Overton."

"Certainly not," Roy said, earnestly. "It is more to me that you should look your best, and watching is not conducive to that. I trust nothing will keep Miss Overton to-morrow."

Always Miss Overton. He would persist in bringing her in on all occasions. Georgie fumed with inward rage and hate of the girl who was at that very moment bending over Annie's couch and wiping the moisture from the pale, damp forehead.

Annie was very ill; so ill, indeed, that when Edna first went into her room, although she expressed pleasure at seeing her, she manifested no surprise, and did not ask where she came from. Any curiosity she might have felt upon the subject, had she been in a condition to reason, would have been lost in her bitter disappointment that Georgie had not come. She did not say much when told that sister was not there, but gave a low, moaning cry, and turned her white face to the wall, while her body trembled with the sobs she tried to suppress. When Maude came she seemed better, and, nestling close to her, laid her head upon her arm, and appeared to be sleeping quietly.

While she slept, or seemed to sleep, John freed his mind with regard to Georgie's selfishness. It had always been so, he said. She had left to others what she ought to do herself.

"Why, my mother, who was in no way connected to Annie, did far more for her than Georgie ever did, even when she lived at home," he said, and then the great, dark blue eyes opened wonderingly, fixing upon John's face, while Annie said, faintly:

"Your mother—not mine too—John! Did you say that?"

John was in a hard, desperate mood, and, reckless of consequences, he replied:

"I did say it. Your mother and mine were far different."

"Oh, John," and Annie put up both her hands beseechingly towards him. "Oh, John, who was mother, then, and where is she now? tell me!" she cried, while Maude and Edna both looked up reprovingly. The former said:

"How could you be so imprudent, John, and she so ill and weak?"

"Because I'm a brute, I suppose, and feel impelled sometimes to blurt out things I should not say," John replied as he tried to quiet Annie, who insisted upon knowing "who and where her mother was."

"Ask Georgie, she may tell you, but I cannot," John answered, at last, and with that reply Annie had to be satisfied.

Both Maude and Edna stayed by her during the night, forgetful of their own fatigue, and scarcely giving a thought to the brilliant party of the next evening, or the worn, tired faces they would carry to it, provided they went at all, which seemed very doubtful, as the daylight came creeping into the room and showed them the change in their patient. She was not dying; she might linger for two or three days longer, the physician said, when at sunrise he came, but there was the sign of death upon her face, and she lay perfectly motionless, only speaking occasionally to ask what time it was; if it was to-night the party was to take place, and if Georgie would surely come after it was over. That was her absorbing thought, to see Georgie once more; sister she still called her, for the idea did not seem to have entered her mind that Georgie was not her sister, even though the kind woman whom she remembered well had not been her mother.

Once as Maude was leaving the bedside for a moment, Annie grasped her hand, and said to her:

"You won't go, too, and leave me; nor you?" turning an appealing glance at Edna, then quickly adding: "Yes, you must, you may; you want to see the party, and you'll tell me how Georgie looked, and bring her back with you."

But neither Maude nor Edna had any heart for gay festivities then; that white face with the stamp of death upon it would be ever present in their minds, and each came simultaneously to the same conclusion. They could not leave Annie, so a hasty note was written by Maude and despatched to the London house, saying that though Annie was not in immediate danger, neither Miss Overton nor herself could think of leaving her unless their services were absolutely required. Would Georgie see Mrs. Churchill for Miss Overton, and if possible send word if she was comfortable and willing to be left alone another day?

Georgie read this note in her own room, and when she saw that Annie was no worse, an involuntary "Thank Heaven!" dropped from her lips, while her next remark was: "I knew John was more alarmed than he need be—he always is;" then she was conscious of a mean feeling of relief that Edna was to be absent that evening. The girl was too beautiful and attractive not to be noticed and admired, while Roy—well, Roy needed some discipline in that direction—he was altogether too much interested in her; and Georgie ground her teeth together as she recalled certain looks she had seen him give to "that hypocrite."

Mrs. Burton was greatly disappointed that Maude was not coming back, she depended so much upon her, she said, to fill up the gaps and amuse all the dull, prosy people. But Georgie quieted her down, and promised to do her own part and Maude's too, then went away herself to see Mrs. Churchill, who, in a different way, was quite as sorry about Edna as Mrs. Burton had been about Maude.

"She has been anticipating it so much, and her dress is so pretty, and she would be so sure to be appreciated and admired, that I cannot bear that she should lose it all," she said, smoothing fondly the gauzy folds of the party dress, which had been sent home, and was spread out upon her bed.

Georgie was so sorry, too, and felt almost as if she must go herself and take Dotty's place, only Mrs. Burton would not hear of it; and it was a great relief to know that Annie was being cared for by nurses as efficient and kind as Maude and dear Miss Overton, neither of whom should lose anything by their unselfish kindness.

This was what Georgie said, and her voice was sweet, low, and sad; then she kissed Mrs. Churchill tenderly, and bade her come over early, and tripped back to the house, where the preparations were going on rapidly for the coming night.

(To be continued.)

GREAT tracts of pine wood are every year destroyed by fire in the South of France. M. Schrader, who has tried to discover the origin of these fires, has come to the conclusion that they are caused by the sun's heat setting fire to the vapour of turpentine which is contained in the trunk, and which is exposed to direct contact with external heat by the holes bored for the extraction of turpentine.

A MAN STRONG ONLY IN HIS MANHOOD.—The strength of man is in his character. Human life makes man's strength to stand outside of himself, and in his circumstances. A man is strong in proportion to his friends, in proportion to his wealth, and in proportion to his position, and his influence is in proportion to his reputation in the world's esteem. But in truth a man is strong only in his manhood; and how much there is of a man, you must ascertain by measuring his character. For

one may be the possessor of houses and lands, of stocks and bonds, of gold and silver, of ingots, and chests filled and refilled therewith—one's possessions may be vast, and, after all, the wealth may have a fool for an owner. A man is not strong by what he has, but by what he is; and in measuring what a man is, we are to measure his character.

THE DIAMOND COLLAR.

CHAPTER XI.

So will I turn her virtues into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. Othello.

THE Honourable Peregrine Tyrrol had a letter in his hand.

He was booted and spurred, and his red hunter was at the door; he was going hunting.

But, fond as he was of the chase, there was something he was yet fonder of, and it was the tidings this letter in his hand contained. His black eyes snatched with satisfaction, and his handsome mouth expanded into the smile which Gorry called "hateful;" in short, our Perry was very much pleased.

Crumbling the note into the pocket of his riding-coat, he descended to his horse, and rambled off, followed by his man—Henry Wade—a good-looking young fellow, but terribly sulky; as fine a valet, groom, or confidential Mercury as could be found in England; but young Tyrrol complained that he had a devil of a temper.

When they came to Bramble's Hill, where the rendezvous was, Perry dismissed his groom, with the words:

"Off with you, man, and tell them not to wait for me. I'll be with them at the old road."

Wade touched his hat, made for the rendezvous, and only cast one long look after his master.

Tyrrol was galloping madly on the road back to the bishop's palace.

"Just so, my master," quoth Wade, with a scowl, and, meeting the huntmen, delivered the message, then instantly vanished.

Tyrrol's correspondent had requested, in execrable idiom, the honour of a word with him in the woods by the bishop's palace at eleven o'clock that morning.

Obedient to the urgent, though ungrammatical summons, Tyrrol was posting thither as fast as Gorry could carry him.

He was before time, as it turned out, and had leisure to tie his hunter to a tree well back from the highway, before his correspondent came dodging through the iron-gray trunks, seeking him.

With a "Halloo, my good fellow!" from Tyrrol, Jonson shaped his steps that way, and shortly joined him—cringing, obsequious, sly.

"So you've been busy—have you?" said Tyrrol, with his derisive smile.

"That I have, sir."

"Much going on over there?"

Tyrrol nodded towards the palace. He could not see it from where he stood, but the sneer on his face was as expressive as if he did, with the bishop and his niece in front of it.

"Someat, your honour. I'm not meaning to boast, your honour, but things is kept so uncommon, doosed sly that it just takes even me to find a scent at all to go by."

"Oh, of course, your services are peculiarly difficult, therefore valuable. Be sure you remind me of that. You'll be well rewarded, my clever fellow, for whatever you can tell me that bears on the case in hand. Go on now."

"Well, your honour, the day that she brought Miss Fane to the palace—"

"Who brought?"

"The lady as I'm a-spyin' on. P'raps it's best not to use no names."

"Fiddlestick!"

"A fine scene there was. The housekeeper—whom I shall name as Mrs. B., your honour—must have told his lordship where miss went the minute he came home, for when I got there, after running to give you the hint at the 'Dragon,' I heard him a-tramping up and down his libry floor—he always does when he's bothered. That minx, Gretchen, kept herself shut up in them south rooms, and took good care none of us should see how she took it now; but the minute the carriage comes inside the gate, the bishop, he comes out of his study, black and wrathful; and Gretchen, she comes down-stairs, grim as a owl, biting her lips, and first thing she gets at me."

"Oh, you're back, are you? Why didn't you stay with Miss Thouvenal to protect her?"

"Says I, as easy as a old shoe:

"'Highly tighty, my dear; here she comes as safe as Moses; and knowing that I wasn't needed no

more, I made bold to do a message for his reverence in the village," says I.

"Well, then, you may be off," she says, as pert as a magpie, "for my mistress don't like to see a crowd about the door, as if she was a show."

"But I knew a trick worth two of that. Gretchen is scared at me, though she tries a little bullying now and agen, and I wasn't afeard."

"Yes, my dear," says I, as perlitte as a dancing-master, "as soon as I've made ready for miss coming in. You know his reverence is wery particular that we shows our breeding."

"She stared at me in a way which, to say the least of it, made me feel wery uncomfortable, and then stepped up to his lordship, as was out on the steps a-watching miss and Miss Fane in the carriage."

"My lord," says she, in her confounded half-whisper, which, your honour, is hard to catch, "you see madam is safe. Don't be uneasy any longer about her, nor reproach her for endangering her health this cold day. See, she has brought back a companion, and seems much delighted."

"His reverence looked as if he did not understand her, but smiled as kind as could be on the lying gipsy as was making all this palaver just to throw me out, your honour."

"Oh, Ermengarde! oh, Ermengarde! Are you mad?" nat'rally queries his reverence.

"My lord," says I, sidling up, "my dear miss looks none the worse for her drive—are you, miss?"

"Not I," she smiles; "and this dear girl is much the better for it," meaning Miss Fane, your honour."

"Next thing I hear is that miss is took alarming sick. Gretchen comes down and fetches his reverence, and they nurses miss two days with locked doors, as if she was a madwoman."

"Mrs. B. reports that Miss Fane has told her her dear miss has had such a fright putecting her from your honour, that she hasn't been able to hold up her head since; and Mrs. B. bangs your honour up hill and down dale, to which—I'll not deny it, your honour, such is my veracity—I sometimes answers yes."

"But they don't send for Dr. Marks—not a bit of it; they've got too much to conceal for that. So miss is nursed by Gretchen and your honour's young friend, while his reverence hangs about the door with a grim face, as if your honour was a Satan."

"All at once the bishop goes off to Berney's Wood to see Lord Edgar Berney. Burlington tells me all about it when they come back, and likewise that adkship aren't at home. But he's gone off again stra morning, which hearing, I made bold to send 'ou word."

Peregrine Tyrrol, leaning against a great chestnut trunk, had listened to his spy's account with eager interest; smiling oft in his dry, derisive manner, as if the story of the bishop's love and care for his niece afforded him ineffable amusement.

"What's the game now?" muttered he, angrily. "What's Berney got to do with it? I'll examine into this matter presently. Now, Jonson, you haven't found out much yet, so I won't pay up accounts till you've brought me something important. All you have told me only confirms me in my previously formed convictions. Fetch me something I don't know and the cash shall be yours. Eh? what makes you laugh, my fine fellow?"

"There is something your honour wants to know, I take it, which may be important, and more likely ain't. But I volunteers no information, sir. If it's wanted, well and good; here it is."

"By George, what do you hint at? Speak out!" "Mayhap it won't bear on the case neither; belike I'd best hold my tongue."

"Is it anything more about Berney?"

"Something about a—something as was lost, your honour."

Tyrrol gazed at him; a change passed over his face; an eager, greedy light shone from his fixed eye-balls.

"By Jove, man, if it's what I think, that alone would make your fortune!"

"Would, eh?" grinned Jonson. "But first, what'll you give me for telling you?"

"Depends on its value, my man."

"Oh! Who's to value it, your honour?"

"You're a greedy blockhead. I'll give you a hundred guineas if it's anything about a—"

Tyrrol stared at him cautiously: "a black, brass-bound box," he whispered.

Jonson's grin betokened delight.

"Right you are, sir; right as a trivet!" he chuckled; "it is about a black brass-bound box."

Tyrrol tried to conceal the joy which broke from his dark eyes. He could not, and Jonson saw it.

"Mr. Tyrrol," said he, with modest gravity, "I can't disguise from myself that this here spyin' on a persing as has always been good to me is unworthy of me. I don't think that them feelings of remorse, your honour, will let me say any more under two hundred guineas, your honour."

Tyrrol swore angrily at him, but assented, in his impatience.

Jonson then detailed the actions of the bishop after finding the ebony casket, which we have described in the earlier chapters. When he came to the visit of the mysterious lady, Tyrrol, whose eyes were glistening like those of a tiger who scents his prey, hoarsely ordered him to describe her.

"Easy done," smirked Jonson, "for, says I to myself, 'I'll know you again next time I sees you.' She had on a black silk gown, which was soft and thick, like some furrin sort of stuff, and trailed a yard or more behind her, and a black velvet bonnet, with a thick black lace veil over her face, and a mantle, black too, which she had flung over her shoulders careless like, as if she didn't care much to look like every lady. I didn't hear her voice, your honour, but, lor! I'd know her by that walk of hers anywhere."

Tyrrol gazed fixedly at the man; his lips fairly twisted with eagerness; he seemed as if he would have willingly torn the meaning of that complacent chuckle out of him on the spot.

"And have you ever seen her again?" demanded he, breathlessly.

"No, indeed, your honour; wish I had," said Jonson.

Tyrrol looked at him, saw that he was perfectly sincere, and burst into a roar of convulsive mirth.

Jonson watched him uneasily, then angrily. Not a glimmer of the truth dawned on him. He had such perfect confidence in his own sharpness that he never dreamed that there was anything to discover beyond what he had discovered. So Tyrrol's laughter only exasperated him; he began to be sure that he was about to be defrauded of his two hundred guineas.

"What's up, I'd like to know?" muttered he. "Is your honour laughing at me, or at your honour's self?"

"All right, Jonson," responded Tyrrol, "don't feel hurt. I've done with my laughter for awhile, and shall pay you what I promised. The joke's worth two hundred guineas down, and down they go. By the way, did you ever hear of the black box again, after the day you saw the bishop carry it in?"

"No, your honour."

"Is the bishop's desk still locked?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Now, my fine fellow, I'll tell you what I'll do for you. Come to Vionna any morning this week, and I'll hand you the cash. Bring me a budget of news. This is the next thing you must do for me. Find what Thouvenal wants with Berney."

"Yes, sir."

"Be off now, and don't wear that sulky face, my man. I'm going to make your fortune."

Jonson bowed deferentially and shrank away. His heart was bitter. Tyrrol's laugh was an insulting one.

It had not been explained. Jonson remembered it, and his remembrance of an affront was not wholesome. It had been known to bear bitter fruits.

Different were Tyrrol's emotions. He stood in an attitude of rapt meditation for some time after he was left alone.

Again and again he muttered, with a satanic smile:

"I've found the missing link—the chain's complete. Hurray!"

His countenance was the concentration of triumph; his dark eyes changed to green; his white teeth glistened behind that slight, dry smile; eyes and lip proclaimed a villain's exultation.

At last he led Genie out of the wood, mounted, and went off to the hunt.

Everybody noticed what excellent spirits Mr. Tyrrol was in. His man Wade met him on Bramleigh Hill, and in silence followed him throughout the hunt.

If the master was jocular, the man was not. His swart face was set and stern; his eyes brooded darkly; he sped after the sprightly Tyrrol like an evil fate.

Wade had something on his mind.

CHAPTER XII.

Fear not. The villain's steel
Shall forceless fall upon the shield I bear,
And ere the night has chased this closing day
I'll trap him in the pit he digs for thee.

Massinger.

BISHOP THOUVENAL had indeed driven off in Miss Thouvenal's elegant little chariot to Berney's Wood, as the residence of Lord Edgar was designated.

His lordship was eldest son of Chalmoudely Ernest Berney, twelfth Earl of Lonsdale, and had lived at his seat, Berney's Wood, ever since he had come of age.

The earl and countess resided in a magnificent mansion in London, the countess having a position at Court, and his lordship a seat in the House of Peers.

Lord Edgar's three brothers—Ernest, D'Arcy, and Harold—were at college, and his sisters, Josephine and Oriana, were already starting it in London as acknowledged belles, and being much petted at St. James's.

The Berneys were indeed a very distinguished family—always had been; lofty in mind and manner, with such purity through their long line of descent, they could afford to be intolerant to the last degree of aught that hinted at mystery or disgrace. A noble family they were, without a stain on their escutcheon.

No wonder then that the golden-haired Lord Edgar had turned the heads of half the county since he had taken up his abode at Berney's Wood.

On the morning when the Honourable Peregrine Tyrrol was holding his audience in the woods by the bishop's palace, my lord reclined on a sofa by one of the long windows in the stone hall, where he kept his hunting gear.

The lonely man was in a dream.

A round, rosy face like a cherub's was gazing with all its might down into his eyes, and her dear little lips were quivering instead of smiling.

"The poor little darling!" Edgar's heart was saying over, and over again, like the refrain of a song.

Then a snow-white countenance, lit with eyes of phosphorescent blue, swam between him and Gerry, and he lay breathless before the vision.

The sorrowful majesty of that face sent a strange thrill to his heart; his blood grew hot and unsteady.

Reverie not being frequently entertained at Lord Edgar's, he fell asleep, and dreamed that his man, Trooper, came to tell him that Miss Thouvenal had arrived.

He was awakened, indeed, by Trooper shaking his shoulders, but saw his lordship the Bishop of Bishoptowe standing before him; while the brutes Thunder and Mufineer, instead of barking at the bishop, were snuffing his hands, and amicably wagging their tails. Up sprang Lord Edgar, laughing, and apologised to the bishop for his laziness.

"I was so sorry, my lord, that I was hunting when you called yesterday; although you left no mes age, I stayed at home to-day, hoping you would call again, and so—and so I fell asleep," quoth he, in his frank, manly way.

And he forced the bishop to follow him into a more luxuriously furnished chamber, deaf to the mild assurance that he had only come as a messenger, and would be gone directly.

"You'll have some luncheon, my dear sir!" insisted Lord Berney, cordially. "It's a long way from your house here, and December is a hungry month."

"No, thanks! I must return without loss of time. Sir, I called yesterday to thank you, with what sincerity I cannot describe, for your interference between Mr. Tyrrol and my niece."

"Don't—don't say a word about it!" cried Edgar, very gravely, only thinking of the way it had shut him out from darling little Gerry. "I was forced, in a measure, to interfere, since the ladies were unprotected. I don't seek acknowledgments for such an involuntary act."

"I did not find you yesterday," resumed the bishop, and one who knew his natural mildness could not but note how quick and imperative his manner was—"and was obliged to return to-day, with an addition to my errand. Miss Thouvenal has been ill from the effects of that disagreeable incident"—here a look of such unmistakable grief came over the bishop's face that the young man marvelled greatly, having little sympathy himself for pining women, who fell ill from fright (Gerry, you know, never did that),—

—but she is recovered to-day, and, sir, she desires not only that I will express to you my own gratitude for your service, but that I will bring you back with me that you may receive her kindness in person. Miss Thouvenal, my lord, is a strange being, and must be obeyed. She has broken through her impenetrable reserve in requesting to see you. I am astonished; but still I obey her. I trust that your kindness of heart will impel you also to obey her in this matter."

Lord Edgar was for a time too astounded to speak. The chance of again meeting that mysterious and extraordinary woman was bewildering in itself, but when he recalled the wild rumours of Miss Thouvenal's insurmountable dislike to strangers, and also when he saw in the bishop's manner such a strange mixture of impatience and anxiety, the single-hearted fellow stared at him in a sort of sympathetic trance.

"My dear lord bishop," he said, at last, "I shall certainly go with you, since Miss Thouvenal does me the honour to desire it; but, indeed, she has nothing to thank me for. I shall feel ashamed of hearing her thank me for what was only—pshaw! what's the use of mentioning it? I was particularly fortunate in doing her a service, and I'll tell her so. Come, my lord, won't you drink a glass of wine?"

The bishop refused, mildly enough, but with such a heartsick glance of impatience towards Miss Thou-

venal's little curriole, which was visible from one of the drawing-room windows, that Lord Edgar strode off on the instant to prepare for his drive.

Until he returned the bishop roamed absently about the spacious green and gold drawing-room, reading a gloomy story as it appeared on the mossy carpet as he trod.

They left the round towers of the Berney mansion, with its thick circling trees, and over a carpet of fallen snow Burlington drove the pretty ponies back to the palace.

Lord Edgar's face flushed as he glanced up at the lonely looking old house, and thought of the beautiful creature who lived her strange and solitary existence there. Never before had he become embroiled with mystery; his imprudence and its sensations were alike an anomaly to him.

Who was the bishop's niece?

Probably some daughter of a high family, who, for some imprudence of her own, had been banished to the watchful guardianship of her uncle, the bishop.

He must be very careful not to become too much interested; no, no; that would never do at all for a Berney! Oh, dear, no! Everybody knew, from generation to generation, all about the Countesses of Lonsdale; and each one was a pattern of spotlessness. Oh, dear, no!

Johnson, with obsequious politeness, opened the door to let the bishop and his guest come in, and stared with eager eyes after them as they walked straight upstairs to Miss Thouvenal's rooms.

Gerry's knight of the golden hair looked wonderingly at the cold, bare passage and at the dim staircase which he traversed. But much was his wonder increased when he was admitted by an attendant into a little ante room, dainty as an Eastern saloon, paved with red and white marble in beautiful mosaic, and hung with scarlet cloth, embroidered with white silk, in splendid point Ruse.

A door of heavy walnut was before him; it was hung on silver hinges. When Gretchen opened it he saw that it was enveloped in blue plush, so that it could close noiselessly, as well as muffle all sounds within the enchanted palace of the mysterious inmate.

The bishop went in before his guest, advanced a few steps, and said, in a deferential manner:

"Lord Edgar Berney is here, Miss Thouvenal."

Then he stood aside, and waved him forward.

The hardy hunter advanced, head up, like a knight of the olden days, and beheld what he thought a vision most marvellous.

The lady whom he had last seen in the carriage, regally flashing scorn and defiance at Peregrine Tyrrol, was rising slowly from a great blue brocade easy-chair.

Clad in a soft white dress, that fell in lustrous folds about her, with a garnet-coloured velvet robe, train-shaped, sweeping the white velvet carpet, and a garnet velvet fillet binding back her pure flaxen hair from her forehead, increasing the pellucid whiteness of her complexion by contrast, this matchless lady stood to receive her deliverer like a princess reviving a favourite vassal—superb and condescending.

Yet there was that in Miss Thouvenal's face which gave Lord Edgar a turn he never felt before. Her eyes, so blue, such heavenly blue, were full of tears; her calm, splendid face was pallid with illness; a veil, impalpable as the ether we breathe, yet as life-giving, hovered over the image of snow, and made her a relentless woman—'twas the mist of tender weakness.

Lord Berney would have admired her for ever and ever as the empress of all things perfect had his last look been at her in her chariot; he saw to-day a lovely woman, and his heart came to a great stopping-place in its experiences.

"Lord Edgar Berney, I greet you as my friend," said the lady of the enchanted palace, offering her hand, which sparkled with rich rings; "pray let me treat you as such."

He took the slender hand and bent low over it, as far a knight of courtesy as ever won lady's hand for love.

"Miss Thouvenal does me an honour far beyond my poor service," returned Lord Edgar, when he had pressed her hand for one moment in his; "surely, to be called her friend would make any man glad to measure swords, instead of tongues, with a rascal—in her defence."

Miss Thouvenal smiled at this pretty speech, and sank into her azure throne again.

Lord Edgar could not but glance about him as he took the seat which Gretchen offered him.

"I have wished to convey to you my gratitude, Lord Edgar, for the gallant service you rendered me in such dire distress," said Miss Thouvenal, in her foreign tones; "and I hope that, having in a manner brought you here captive, you will not judge that I have done an unusual thing, since I wished personally to express my approbation?"

Lord Berney murmured something about the trifling service having been vastly over-paid already, and his gesture of impatience was regarded by Miss Thouvenal with wonder.

That any one should display a spirit of contradiction towards her seemed to fill her with deep surprise not, unmingled with curiosity, and she kept her eyes fixed upon the young nobleman with an expression which gradually covered him with perplexity.

"I have not many friends," said Miss Thouvenal, with her slight and melancholy smile, "but those I have I prize much. You see the bishop?" who had remained standing slightly in the rear of the young nobleman. "He is my best friend. My lord, I have suffered much grief and terror; he has succoured me. Ah, my good uncle!" she cried, heedless of his downcast eyes and seeming lack of sympathy, "I owe you so much that the debt crushes me. I must tell this gallant gentleman how precious I hold your safety, and how I have imperilled it."

"Every one reveres my lord bishop," murmured Lord Edgar, astonished at the uncle as much as at the niece, "and if I can save him or you, lady, from any threatened annoyance—"

"Yes, my lord, yes," she responded, giving him a radiant smile. "I knew you would not fail me. Do you see this girl, then—this Gretchen?" who, also grave and frowning, kept jealous watch of the scene, sometimes looking with extraordinary anxiety at her mistress; "she is also my friend. My lord, she has followed me through a sorrowful past, and with no hope of recompense. She has clung to me when a word of hers against me would have made her fortune. She is a brave woman, and her also I account my friend."

Again Lord Berney murmured something.

"It would be impossible to be anything else than faithful to the death in your service, Miss Thouvenal," he said.

She looked at him, and, like a queen on her throne, beckoned him nearer.

"You, my lord, have showed no idle curiosity, nor distasteful lack of courtesy; on the contrary, you have done me a chivalrous kindness in a manner which shows you a trusty knight of honour. For this I claim you as my third and last friend, and I thank Heaven for you."

As she concluded this strange address Lord Berney felt his heart bound, a hot flush swept over his face; he was forced by some inner prompting to bend lightly on one knee before her.

"Miss Thouvenal," he cried, "you flatter my character, but not my inclination. You have put upon me an honour which I shall try my best to deserve. Show me how I can act a friend's part; I long to be of service."

It would never do to become interested in a lady whose history was a secret—oh, dear, no!

And this was not becoming interested with a vengeance—oh, dear, no!

"My lord, I accept your offers of assistance," said Miss Thouvenal, graciously; "and since you are to be my champion, you shall wear my colours. Accept this in memory of your allegiance."

She drew from her finger an opal ring, and kissing it with an enchanting smile, offered it to the young noble, who, still on one knee, bowed his thanks, and slipped it on his fourth finger.

The bishop, standing at the door, uttered a stifled exclamation, turned, and passed out. The action was too excited to escape notice.

Gretchen mumbled some words in German to her mistress, and eagerly preferred some request.

It was granted, and she hastily followed the bishop, leaving Miss Thouvenal with a somewhat perplexed expression on her face.

These incidents were so remarkable that young Edgar, standing near the azure chair, naturally looked for some explanation.

"My lord bishop looked agitated," he said.

"Did he?" returned Miss Thouvenal, with an anxious look; "Gretchen thought so too, and she has gone to see if he felt ill. He is in deep distress because of me," she said, with a sorrowful sigh, "for I am naught but a source of terror and grief to all who care for me. My lord, this good man, who has made an asylum of his house for me, is wearing his heart out in apprehensions for my safety; knowing nothing of my past history, which, indeed, I may reveal to none, he yet sorrows for my misfortunes, and incurs danger for my welfare. Sir, you are brave and generous; you shall bear half his burden. Bishop Thouvenal has done a saintly action towards a poor, friendless girl, for which he has won the hatred of that wicked man whom you found persecuting us. Tyrrol has sworn to have his revenge on my uncle through me, by finding out, and revealing to the world my past history. My lord, that history is a sorrowful but a guiltless one; it must not be revealed, else my doom is sealed. Tyrrol thinks he

will find that in my past life which shall debase my uncle; he will only bubble to the world a riddle which shall destroy me, and, by my fate, break my uncle's heart. Will you—will you protect me for Bishop Thouvenal's sake? Ah, Lord Edgar, will you guard me from this Tyrrol?"

Hands clasped, eyes eloquent with the most touching appeal, this entrancing creature had but to ask to be eagerly obeyed.

The knight whom she had chosen with the wisdom of unerring instinct cried, ardently:

"Miss Thouvenal, for your sake I would die to serve you. Leave it all to me. Tyrrol shall give his word before the day is out to trouble you no more."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," she said, with such a trustful look of gratitude that his heart throbbled wildly for days after whenever he thought of it.

Then Gretchen came in, with a peculiar pallor of feature, but still with no terror or pain in her face, and announced that the bishop had been slightly ill, but was returning presently. And until he did return Miss Thouvenal conversed almost gaily with Lord Edgar, showing by a thousand unconscious signs that her confidence in him was so great that she considered that she had gained a very strong ally.

She was laughing in her simple manner when the bishop entered, composed, yet almost gloomy. She glided forward and laid her hand affectionately upon his arm.

"What is this I hear? Our good uncle ill?" she asked, softly; "what caused it?"

"I am better," returned the bishop, with the tones of an automaton. "Grant me pardon, Ermengarde, for my abrupt departure."

"I know you will rejoice," she cried, regaining her radiance, "when I tell you that Lord Edgar has promised to enter the lists on my behalf, and surely victory must attend such a brave chevalier."

"My lord," said Edgar, also approaching the bishop, "Miss Thouvenal has explained to me the annoyance which Tyrrol is giving her and you. I will, without loss of time, set that matter right; and, with your permission, I will call upon Miss Thouvenal shortly, and report my success."

Never a word said the bishop, but he bowed his head to all.

"Come, my lord," said Miss Thouvenal, briskly, "send forth my knight with your blessing."

The bishop lifted his sombre eyes to Lord Berney's face.

"According to your fidelity to this unhappy lady, so I bless your undertaking," said he, with almost threatening solemnity.

Bending his head for a moment, Edgar murmured a deep "Amen!"

Miss Thouvenal then dismissed him most kindly, and he was soon rolling back to Berney's Wood in the little chariot.

"Uncle, why so sad?" said Ermengarde, gently.

"Is not the worst overcome? This fine young nobleman will not rest content until Tyrrol promises to be silent. Ah, he will protect us from threatening dangers!"

"Madam," exclaimed the bishop, with extraordinary vehemence, "I would die to save you from danger—it is my duty! But this Englishman, he will presume—ah! madam, absurd as it seems, he will presume to love you. You, madam—"

He stopped abruptly, bent his head, kissed the hem of her long, flowing sleeve, and immediately withdrew.

Ermengarde looked at her maid with a very odd expression.

"He knows?" she inquired, and paused breathlessly.

"He knows that you confide too much to strangers," responded Gretchen, with severe deference; "and he is jealous, madam—jealous of your honour!"

(To be continued.)

A SHORT TIME since a gentleman whose monetary interests in the Stock Exchange greatly depended on news he should receive consequent on the war, awaited an important telegram in the City, which was to reveal to him the success or otherwise of a hazardous speculation he had made. The state of his excitement and the tension to his nerves was so excessive during the time he waited, that when the telegram arrived announcing the safety of his venture, the reaction was so great that he went raving mad.

A HAPPY IDEA.—Leeches are most sensitive of approaching storms. Hours previously to one, they all leave the water, as all know, and cling to the upper part of the perforated jar. Now, if this perforated bulb were bent forward by a long neck, the weight of the leeches crowding into it would cause it to turn the balance, and drop on an electric machine, to convey unerring information to nations.

THE LONDON READER AND LIFE AND FASHION.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ESTHER.—Such a proceeding is not a marriage.

SMETWICK.—The most simple method of dyeing the materials a dark brown is to steep them in an infusion of green walnut-peels.

A. U. N.—Gun-cotton is serviceable chiefly for blasting purposes; it cannot be used in the manufacture of ammunition for guns in action on the battle field.

ROBIN HOOD.—You will find what you require in "Weale's Rudimentary Series," a list of the subjects contained in which can be procured through any bookseller.

G. G. McL.—As the lady is not known to us, it is impossible to form an opinion. We can only say that we think corsets are desirable if they fit well and are not laced too tightly.

C. C. (Carillale).—The situations in the Civil Service are now open to public competition. A nomination is not required as heretofore. No recent alteration has been made in the subjects for examination.

MARTHA.—It would depend upon the locality. The quality of rain-water varies greatly according to the source whence it proceeds. Rain falling on the sea-coast contains a great deal of salt.

E. S. T.—The minister of the parish has no such power. The parents can remove the child if they think proper; but the act renders it necessary that the child should be sent to some school.

O. A. T.—Dilute the phosphorus with some mucilage, reduce them both to a liquid state, then add any colouring matter you think proper. Phosphorus will melt at 208 degrees of heat, but a safer way is to dissolve it by alcohol.

CARIE B.—It is dangerous to endeavour to remove the hair on the upper lip, because an efficacious depilatory acts upon the skin. If the operation were successful, there would be a greater disfigurement than at present exists.

F. B.—There is no necessity for you to leave your present employment on the score of exercise, because you could get time for it before you commence work and after you finish; that is, if you make a resolute determination to that effect.

J. J.—The present population of Prussia exceeds twenty millions. Possibly, the population of the German States in alliance with Prussia brings that number up to forty millions. The population of France, excluding Algeria, is about thirty-nine millions.

MISS L. B.—The verses form a love song, the points of which would be spoiled by a literal translation. In them a lover eulogises the beauty, the goodness, and the tenderness of his mistress; declares that her beauty is matchless, and, in an impassioned manner, exclaims that he would die for her!

V. G.—France, we believe, has changed her form of government more frequently than any other nation. The recent revolution is her fifth. The dates of her former revolutions are 1789, 1830, 1848, and 1851. The palace of the Tuileries in Paris was completed by Louis XIV., who commenced to reign in 1643.

A CONSTANT READER.—The ex-Emperor of the French was elected Emperor on the 21st November, 1836, and declared Emperor on the 2nd December following. We are not aware that any coronation ceremony took place. The crown of France and other State regalia are deposited with the Bank of France for safe custody.

HARRIET S.—We strongly advise single young women to emigrate. The Australian colonies are, in our judgment, to be preferred. New Zealand is considered to be one of the Australian colonies; and Mr. Ottywell, Canterbury Emigration Office, 16, Charing Cross, London, would give you information about the assisted passages.

ADA.—Nineteen is rather young to be married. It would be, perhaps, better to wait a year or two, though, as you are not engaged, your question is hardly relevant. About six or seven years' difference of age between the husband and wife is found to be the most desirable thing upon that score.

GAZELLE.—You will do much better to follow your own instincts in the matter than to try to learn from the art of wooing. It is a generally received notion that the softer sex have simply to be won. The wooing falls to the lot of the men. In our wish to accommodate, however, we may do no harm in directing you to a precedent whose authority is of great weight. If you study the earlier speeches of Othello, you will discover the means which Desdemona employed to enlist his sympathies,

and the expressions which fell from her lips, which caused the Moor to say: "Upon this hint I spoke." May you share Desdemona's success, and be spared her fate!

L. E.—1. The date of the capitulation of the fortress of Ulm, in South Germany, is October, 1805. The number of Austrian prisoners surrendered to the French on that occasion was twenty-eight thousand. 2. The mitrailleuse will be, most likely, adopted by the British army as an offensive weapon. Report speaks favourably of the recent experiments at Shoeburyness.

A. V.—Here and there exceptional cases are to be found, but, as a rule, marriage should be looked upon as one of the serious duties of life. Wise parents, so far from opposing the settlement of their children, are anxious to promote it.

CHARLES E.—There are in Germany two cities named Frankfurt—one in Central Germany, on the Main, and the other in North Germany, on the Oder. It was the former place, then, in Frankfurt-on-the-Main, which was held by the first Napoleon from 1803 to 1813. This statement will enable you to clear up your difficulty.

INQUIRE.—The expression to which you have called attention is used in a figurative sense. The lady could urge her horse forward without the aid of a mechanical spur. Upon reflection, doubtless many examples will occur to you in which the same word is figuratively employed: Ladies do not, literally, wear spurs.

G. W. (Glasgow).—There is a great improvement in the song you have re-written, yet the rhythm does not now flow smoothly. As one instance, take the last line of the first stanza; it is, at least, a foot too long. The other pieces are not so good.

ROWLANDS.—1.—The German National Assembly elected the present King of Prussia Emperor of Germany in 1849. His Majesty, however, then declined the honour. 2. The province of Alsace was united to France in 1697, and Lorraine in 1766. 3. Marshal Blucher is the name of the Prussian general who brought his forces to the aid of Wellington on the field of Waterloo in 1815.

HARVEST HOME.

Slow ripening in the golden noon,
Drooping, mellow and full, the Harvest Moon;
And up on the freshening breeze
The jocund shouts of the Harvest Aun.

Breast high, amid the golden grain,
I see the lusty reapers' train;
With swinging scythes, a brown-armed row,
Through the long ruddy lanes they go,
The track of each reaper well defined
By the sunny swaths that fall behind,
And his onward course to the grassy shore
By the bearded ranks that fall before.

The oxen tug at the labouring wain,
A-toss and a-floss with the high-heaped grain;
And with healthful toil all bright and warm,
Are the boys and girls of the dear old farm,
Whose willing hands make labour brief
Of stubble sere or tasseled sheaf—
Whose hearts are attuned with the glorious weather,
As they laugh, and, laughing, sing together.

Oh, Moon of the Harvest, sweet and bland!
Oh, fullness and pride of a favoured land!
Where well-stored barns and bursting bins
Richly reward us discarded sin—
Where Toil is honour and Hard Work king,
Grateful and pleased, to you we sing!
With an echo that speaks of the time to come,
When the whole world shall beam like a Harvest Home!

CURIOSITY.—It was the French King Francis I. who was made prisoner at the battle of Pavia, in 1545. He had previously killed seven of the enemy with his own hand. The celebrated saying, "All is lost, except honour," originated in an expression made by him. The recent Emperor of the French is the seventh French sovereign deprived of his liberty by the fortune of war.

ISA.—An ordinary pill, composed of rhubarb and gentian, or the liquid dose of rhubarb and magnesia, is the most simple remedy. The handwriting appears to us very free and nice. There cannot possibly be any impropriety in subscribing yourself "Yours, sincerely." It is when the acquaintance ripens, and when you have progressed through all the sincerities to "yours, affectionately," that danger may possibly be apprehended.

T. F.—Very pretty, but the last verse is somewhat of a lame conclusion. To be buried in a pleasant spot is the cherished desire of many, but few think of the grave as a place of rest for evermore. Ere the body is consigned to the earth, the spirit which departed from it soared far away. Where went the spirit? How will the promised reunion take place? The thoughts that are limited to the tomb are sad indeed.

G. J. H.—1. Corns can be reduced and often eradicated by the use of the emollient plaister called diachylon, which can be procured of any chemist. Remove the plaister occasionally, and as you do so take away with your nail as much of the corn as possible. Use the warm foot-bath and select a good bootmaker to provide you with boots made to measure. 2. Stanton's "Handbook of Cheese," published by Bell and Daldy. 3. The handwriting is distinct, but has no pretensions to style.

SKELINA.—The mixture is harmless. The cost is about three shillings. It is requisite that you should use it constantly, or its effect will gradually disappear. It will, we think, be very imprudent for you to put on false colours. Your youth is a great charm, but should any one fall in love with you and discover that your hair is dyed, he will very likely be disappointed with you and leave you. As far as the time is concerned it is probable that your stature will increase.

LEONORA.—Notwithstanding the change in his position he is still liable under the affiliation order, and if he do not comply with its terms, his goods can be taken under a warrant, or he may be committed to prison for three months, or until the arrears and expenses be paid. You must be diligent, for if you suffer the payments to be in arrears for more than thirteen weeks without applying

to a magistrate, you cannot recover for more than thirteen weeks.

JANE E., twenty, tall, fair, and good tempered. Respondent must be tall, good looking, and a mechanic.

ANNE, twenty-two, medium height, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, and able to keep a wife.

LIZZY, twenty-two, dark, good looking, and fond of home. Respondent must be dark, and a sailor.

P. F., twenty-one, 5ft. 5in., fair, and light blue eyes. Respondent must be domesticated, loving, and cheerful.

J. A., 5ft. 8in., black curly hair, gray eyes, and dark complexion. Respondent must be domesticated, loving, and cheerful.

ROSEBUD, seventeen, petite, very fair, dark hair and eyes, pretty, musical, and fond of home. Respondent must be a gentleman.

DAISY, seventeen, dark, rather short, brown eyes, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall, dark, good tempered, and about twenty-one.

STANDARD COMPASS, twenty-seven, 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, dark brown hair, steady, loving, and a petty officer in the Navy. Respondent not to exceed twenty-three, and to be loving and domesticated.

CHILD'S HAROLD, tall, light hair, blue eyes, nose slightly aquiline, good complexion, white hands, in a good position, and plays the piano and harp. Respondent must be dark and warm-hearted.

JERRY, good looking, musical, dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, and has good expectations. Respondent must be a gentleman, fond of home, and in good circumstances.

MOTHER'S PET, nineteen, short, blue eyes, light golden hair, fair complexion, domesticated, and loving. Respondent must be from twenty to thirty, a working man, tall, loving, and fond of home.

THE ROSE OF CASTILE, medium height, slight, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark hair, with a gentle, loving disposition. Respondent should be young, tall, and respectable; a mate of a vessel preferred.

W. P. W., thirty, 5ft. 8in., brown hair, gray eyes, moustache, and a mechanic. Respondent must be domesticated, from twenty-four to twenty-eight, one who would make a working man's home happy, kind, and loving; a resident near Norwich preferred.

BIRDIE AND NINA.—"Birdie," eighteen, medium height, fair, good tempered, fond of home and music. Respondent must be tall, dark, in good circumstances, and about twenty. "Nina," nineteen, tall, brown hair and eyes, and a good musician. Respondent must be tall, dark, and not over twenty-two.

WISCONSIN NELL, FROLICHOME POLL, and LIVELY TIE.—"Winsome Nell," 4ft. 8in., fond of music, amiable, and domesticated. "FrolicHOME POLL," 5ft. 1in., fond of music, and affectionate. "Lively Tie," 4ft. 11in., loving, and can play the piano. Respondents must be from twenty-five to thirty-five, tall, dark, and steady.

SAUCY EMMA, LIVELY BESS, and LONELY LIZZIE.—"Saucy Emma," twenty-four, 5ft. 4in., of pleasing appearance and manners, can play and sing. Respondent must be tall, dark, musical, and fond of home. "Lively Bess," twenty-five, tall, nice looking, and a good equestrian. Respondent must be tall, fair, handsome, and fond of field sports. "Lonely Lizzie," twenty-six, a widow, tall, fair, good figure, and fond of home; has one child. Respondent must be tall; a farmer not objected to. All three move in good society, and are domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

POLLY W. wishes for the cards and address of "C. C." Flying JIB SHEET by—"Nelly," sixteen, brown hair, blue eyes, and fond of a sailor; and—"E. W.," good tempered, industrious, steady, and fond of a sailor.

STURDY HAMILTON by—"A. M. W.," eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, and good looking;—"Rose," twenty, fair, dark blue eyes, light hair, very good looking, affectionate, a good housekeeper, with a small income; and—"A. K.," twenty, fair, dark gray eyes, and light hair, pretty, affectionate, and a good housekeeper.

SINCERITY by—"M. H.," who thinks he would find a loving partner in herself; "Faith," thirty, rather tall, dark, domesticated, and fond of business;—"Annie," thirty; and—"Nelly," thirty, a licensed victualler's daughter, rather tall, dark, and affectionate.

J. B. by—"J. J.," a widow, thirty, affectionate, domesticated, fond of home, and has one child;—"Hope," thirty-two, tall, dark, and affectionate—wishes to exchange cards and address; and—"J. A. E.," thirty-three, tall, fair, domesticated, loving, and would endeavour to make a home happy.

MAJOR, MARK, and CHARLOTTE by—"Tom," "George," and "Fred" (Sergeants in the Army). Tom is tall, dark whiskers, and twenty-six years of age. George is medium height, Auburn hair and whiskers, and twenty-seven. Fred is medium height, fair, and twenty-three. All are fond of home.

* * Now Ready, VOL. XIV. OF THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d. Also, the TITLE AND INDEX TO VOL. XIV. Price 0s. 6d. PENNY.

NOTICE.—Part 89, for OCTOBER, Now Ready, price 7d., containing Steel-Plate Engraving, coloured by hand, of the latest Paris Fashions, with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for October.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

MORNING CAP, COLLAR, CROCHET PURSE, SILK TASSELS, AND STAR IN CROCHET.

CAP FOR MORNING WEAR.—No. 1.

THIS very tasteful cap is made of fine mull muslin. As regards the shape, it depends much on the wearer's head-dress. Let the muslin be cut on the bias, and in an oval shape. The bouquet of field flowers in the centre is in simple embroidery stitch. The muslin must be sufficiently clear to allow of the paper patterns being clearly visible on the right side. Very fine cotton is preferable to thread. The ruche in front is of fine net and narrow Valenciennes; insertion of muslin embroidery conceals the sewing on of the ruche. The bows of ribbon which crown the cap are blended with the ruches. These bows should be Cambridge blue (satin or sarcenet) for fair beauties, and in rose or oiseau for brunettes. The strings of course correspond with the bows and ends.

COLLAR.—No. 2.

THIS collar is made of white lace, with net quillings, and Maltese lace insertion between.

CROCHET PURSE.—No. 3.

THIS purse is made of brown crocheted silk, ornamented with steel beads. Begin with the circular part of the purse, make the chain stitch round.

In the following directions the abbreviations used are s for stitch, l for long stitch, ss for single stitch, r for right, l for left.



MORNING CAP.—No. 1.

Let the 1st row be of single stitch. In the 2nd diminish one st on each side. Proceed as far as the 14th, according to illustration, then begin with the steel beads; 7 ss, 13 l with steel beads, 7 ss. With this, and with each of the following rounds, the pattern for the second side of the purse is repeated.

The 3rd row contains 5 ss, 3 l, 13 ch with glass beads (in working these let white silk be used), 3 l, 5 ss.

4th row.—4 ss, 2 l, 6 r, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 6 r, 2 l, 4 ss.

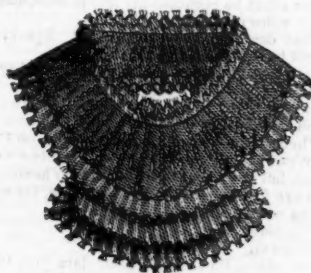
5th row.—3 ss, 2 l, 7 r, 3 l, 3 r, 3 l, 7 r, 2 l, 3 ss.

6th row.—2 ss, 5 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 5 r, 2 ss.

7th row.—3 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 3 l, 13 r, 3 l, 5 r, 1 l, 3 ss.

8th row.—3 ss, 1 l, 7 r, 1 l, 3 r, 9 l, 3 r, 1 l, 7 r, 4 l, 3 ss.

9th row.—3 ss, 1 l, 11 r, 1 l, 9 ss, 1 l, 11 r, 1 l, 3 ss.



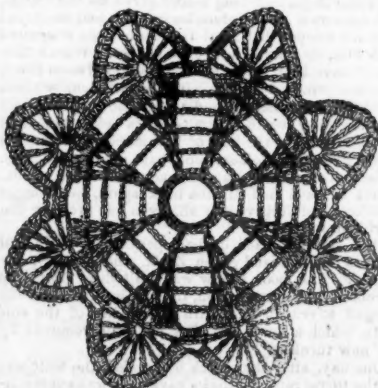
COLLAR.—No. 2.

10th row.—4 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 4 ss.



CROCHET PURSE.—No. 3.

11th row.—5 ss, 1 l, 4 r, 3 l, 2 r, 1 l, 13 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 3 l, 4 r, 1 l, 5 ss.



STAR IN CROCHET.—No. 5.

12th row.—6 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 15 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 6 ss.

13th row.—7 ss, 1 l, 8 r, 1 l, 15 ss, 1 l, 8 r, 1 l, 7 ss.

14th row.—5 ss, 2 l, 9 r, 1 l, 15 ss, 1 l, 9 r, 2 l, 5 ss.

15th row.—3 ss, 2 l, 6 r, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 17 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 6 r, 2 l, 3 ss.

16th row.—2 ss, 1 l, 7 r, 3 l, 2 r, 1 l, 17 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 3 l, 7 r, 1 l, 2 ss.

17th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 17 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

18th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 3 l, 7 r, 1 l, 17 ss, 1 l, 7 r, 3 l, 3 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

19th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 8 r, 1 l, 7 ss, 3 l, 7 ss, 1 l, 8 r, 1 l, 4 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

20th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 7 r, 7 l, 6 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 6 ss, 7 l, 7 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

21st row.—1 ss, 1 l, 6 r, 1 l, 13 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 13 ss, 1 l, 6 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

22nd row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 14 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 14 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

23rd row.—1 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 12 ss, 2 l, 1 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 1 l, 1 ss, 2 l, 12 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

24th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 3 l, 1 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 2 l, 1 r, 2 l, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 3 l, 1 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

25th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 9 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

26th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 9 r, 1 l, 11 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

27th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 12 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 12 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

28th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 7 ss, 3 l, 2 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 3 l, 7 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.



TASSELS.—No. 4.

31s, 2 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 3 l, 7 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

29th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 6 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 2 l, 1 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 1 ss, 2 l, 3 r, 1 l, 6 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

30th row.—1 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 3 l, 1 r, 1 l, 6 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 1 l, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 6 ss, 1 l, 1 r, 3 l, 1 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

31st row.—1 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 3 ss, 3 l, 1 ss, 1 l, 1 ss, 3 l, 1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss, 3 l, 3 ss, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 r, 1 l, 2 ss.

32nd row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 1 l, 3 r, 2 l, 6 r, 1 l, 3 r, 1 l, 6 r, 2 l, 3 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

33rd row.—1 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 1 l, 7 r, 5 l, 3 r, 5 l, 7 r, 1 l, 2 ss, 1 l, 5 r, 1 l, 1 ss.

This completes half of the inner star design, and now the next process is to work the star to the end, by returning on the 32nd row. The bead trimming

is simple enough, and merely requires a thorough study of our illustration.

The central department of this purse is worked in long stitch. The opening of the purse is formed by constantly carrying on the work backwards and forwards. Single stitch is used to join the various parts of the purse. Handsome rings in cut steel match the bead trimming.

TASSELS.—No. 4.

These tassels are not likely to puzzle the initiated, but care must be taken in the selection of the material, so as to avoid the heavy effect that must be produced by the trimming being of a more weighty material than the article trimmed.

CROCHET STAR.—No. 5.

This star is given in the proper size. It would be available for a pincushion or a stand for a fancy bottle. It may be worked in silk, wool, or cotton.

Make a round of 12 chain.

For the subsequent work the abbreviations used are: st for stitch, ch for chain, 1s for long stitch, 1sc for long stitch chain, and ss for single stitch.

In the 1st row work 27 ss; in the 2nd increase it to 40; in the 3rd 50; 8 scallops consisting of 15 ch divided by 5 ss; these are to be joined to the ss of the former row.

In the 4th row the pretty leaves of the foundation are formed by the union of 3 ss, 9 1s, 1 ch, 9 1s, 1 ch, 9 1s, 3 ss on a ch at scallop of a former row, on which, with 3 ch in an eightfold repetition, the process is carried on.

The 5th row consists of 1 1s, with the silk 3 times round the needle, joined to the central st of the ch at scallops in the former row, 5 ch, with each fastening on to the small interstice of the upper point of a leaf, 1 ss, 5 ch, 1 ss, 7 ch, 1 ss, 5 ch, 1 ss; then with 5 ch, repeat from *. With * 2 1s, and fasten on to the first interstice of the former row, and as before add 2 1s, which are fastened on to the next interstice of the former row; then again 2 1s, which fasten on to the next interstice, beginning at the 6th row, and with 12 ch, repeat from *; 30 1s complete the star, 3 ss divide the scallops.

THE FLOWER OF EL ALMEDA.

CHAPTER XIV.

But not for eye can last
The storm, and sweet the sunshine when 'tis past.
Byrant.

MORNING dawned bright and beautiful again over El Almeda, and with the first rays of the sun all was action in the castle. It was to be a gala day, so Abal Hassan had commanded; and why should it not when the gentle Marina was to be wedded to a noble prince?

Yet there were many within the castle who felt pity for their fair mistress. They knew that the husband provided for her was not to her mind, and that she shrank from him as she would from her death. Still they made ready to do her honour, by every observance of the day which lay in their power, and hoped that she would be happy in the new home to which she was going.

To say that the mind of Abal Hassan was at ease would be telling an untruth. He loved his daughter, but he loved power more, and having his own way. He might not have forced her to this marriage if she had shown no preference for the Christian knight, as she had done; but then the alliance with Prince Bajaz would bring him more power, and advance his interest at Court. At all events, his mind was made up that she should be sacrificed, and he was impatient for the time to arrive when his plan should be consummated.

As for the prince, he was equally eager, notwithstanding the rebuff he had met with in his wooing. He had said to himself that it would be but a pleasant task to bring her to his feet. He had conquered others before her, he said, and why should he not succeed now?

And so, as the sun rose in the heavens, the preparations went on, and at last the hour arrived which Abal Hassan had appointed for the ceremony.

In his own apartments he had just had the last finishing touches put to his toilette, when a slave, with a white, scared face, rushed unceremoniously into the room, and prostrated himself before him.

Abal Hassan noticed the look, and he half started from his seat.

"What is it? Hast thou news to tell?" he cried.

"Oh, my master! Would that my tongue had been torn out before it should have uttered the words—thy daughter, my mistress, has gone!"

For a moment the rage and astonishment of Abal Hassan were so great that he could not speak. It

filled him so that it took away his breath, and rendered him incapable of articulating a word. But by a violent effort he regained his lost powers, and cried out, in a voice of frenzy:

"What dost thou mean to tell me? Speak, slave, or I will have thy life!"

"That thy daughter has fled, oh, mighty Abal Hassan."

"Whither?"

"None knoweth."

"When was it proved that she was gone?"

"But now. They went to her chamber to summon her, but it was empty. She and her handmaiden, Zara, have fled together. Yet not alone, for another has gone with them."

"Who, slave?"

"The dwarf."

"Now, slave, thou liest. How dare you tell this untruth to my face? It was only a few hours ago that I consigned him to one of the lowest vaults of the castle."

"And yet it was his dagger that was found but now in the heart of the murdered guard."

"A guard murdered!"

"Yes, my master. The one thou didst station at the postern door. The dagger in his breast was really the dwarf's, for the handle was like a twisted serpent, and there is none other like it among us."

"Now, by the Prophet himself, this is more than man can bear. Away, slave! Send soldiers to the vaults to see if the dwarf has escaped. Bid every man be upon the search. They shall be found and brought back, though they have fled to the heart of Castile. Away."

Glad of this privilege, the slave hastily fled away to obey the orders of his master, and in such a state of mind as no pen can adequately describe. Abal Hassan hastened to inform the prince, and to take with him such measures as they should decide the exigency of the case required.

The rage of Prince Bajaz was hardly less than that of his intended father-in-law, and he swore in the name of Allah that he would fetch back his bride were she to be found upon the earth; and then commenced a search throughout the castle, which only resulted in confirming that which they had been told at first. The dwarf had fled, and with him had gone Marina and her handmaiden.

Then it occurred to Abal Hassan that he alone had been at fault. He had ordered Isaac to be placed in the cell, but had said nothing about anything being taken from him, and the soldiers of the castle did not know, of course, of the keys he possessed. With them it was easy for him to accomplish what he had done.

Orders were now given for swift steeds to be mounted, and their riders to scan the country in all directions. Every available man was mustered for the search, and Abal Hassan and the prince rode forth with them. Far and wide was the country searched. Castile was invaded till its inhabitants thought that war was again declared, and that they were to be overrun with the Moslems again. Robbers, who for years had despised the power of both kingdoms, had their secret holds invaded in search of the lost ones. All was done that human nature could do, but the Flower of El Almeda could not be found.

A week had passed, and the search was over. Day after day had Abal Hassan pursued it with all the strength of an undivided purpose, but all was of no avail. His daughter had left him, and whither she had gone remained a mystery.

Prince Bajaz had long before given up the search, and departed. But before he went he had displayed so much temper that Abal Hassan became disgusted with him, in spite of his high degree. Words that would have been better unaid passed between them, and the prince departed, much crossfallen, without the bride for which he had come, knowing full well that the story would reach Granada before him, and that he would be the butt of innumerable jokes, from which even his high station would not exempt him.

Left alone, Abal Hassan knew not what to do. Could he have had Marina back again, he thought that he could forgive her all, even her love for the Christian knight.

One act of justice he had performed. He had sent to the cell and given Zarik, the turnkey, his liberty. The poor fellow was half dead from the effects of his incarceration, though he had not been obliged to remain long with the bodies of the soldiers, which a few hours after had been removed by the new turnkey.

One day, after the search had ended, the watchers on the turret reported that a cavalcade was approaching the castle. Word was at once sent to Abal Hassan, and he came forth to see who the new-comers might be.

The horsemen, of whom there was a numerous

array, were coming from the direction of Castile, and the first impression was that it was in hostile array that they came. Word was at once given that everything should be in warlike trim, but the command was not carried out in full; for upon a nearer approach, it was discovered that theirs was a peaceful errand, as was determined by the white banners that mingled with those of crimson and gold which floated gaily in the breeze.

But there was yet another sign which told that theirs was an errand of peace. Foremost among the gallant knights in their glittering armour rode a body of fair ladies in the costume of Spanish dames.

What all this could mean Abal Hassan could not determine. It was seldom that he had such company as this, if ever, from over the border. Castile and Grenada were not friendly enough to admit of such visits to and fro, and this raid upon him passed his comprehension.

But onward it came in goodly array; the steeds with their necks arched, and richly caparisoned, the shining armour, and banners flashing in the sunlight, mingling with the many-hued garments of the riders, and over all the sunlight was playing and adding to the scene.

Nearer and nearer came the cavalcade, and at last when it was close to the castle's walls, a herald rode forward and, passing within a spear's throw of the gate, made a proclamation.

"To the mighty Abal Hassan of El Almeda,—Prince Juan of Castile has come to pay thee a friendly visit, and to rest for a time within thy castle."

Then the herald on the part of the Moor replied: "Abal Hassan's greeting to Prince Juan, and bids him welcome. Such as his poor castle affords is at his service."

The Spanish herald galloped back to his party with this answer, and Abal Hassan gave orders for the castle gates to be opened wide; and a little later, the gorgeous train rode into the courtyard, and its leader approached the spot where the Moor was standing to receive his guests, as became him to do.

The visor of the foremost knight was down, yet from his position and noble mien, he doubted not that it was the prince, and so he stepped forward to salute him.

"Thou art welcome, oh, mighty prince," he said. "Though the Moors and the Christians are enemies, yet when they of thy faith come on a peaceful errand they are welcome."

"I thank thee, most mighty Abal Hassan," said the prince. "I have before tested thy hospitality, and do not doubt it now. Though thou hast always been the foe of the Christian, let us hope that the time is coming when thou wilt be so no longer."

Abal Hassan started as though he had received a blow. Where had he heard that voice before? Surely he recognised it, and he gazed upon its owner in amazement.

But the knight did not let him remain in suspense long. With one hand he threw off the visor, and the other he stretched out towards his host.

"Dost thou not recognise me now? Did I not say truly that I had tested thy hospitality before?"

The Moor needed but one glance. He recognised him at once as the Christian knight who had escaped from his castle a week before, and whom he would have slain.

For a moment he stood motionless, and then he sprang forward, crying as he did so:

"Where is my child? Where is the Flower of El Almeda that thou didst wail away from me?"

"Here, oh, my father," cried the voice of Marina, and from one of the steeds came a beautiful maiden, who ran and threw herself at the old man's feet.

"Thou art, indeed, Marina," cried the Moor, in joyful accents. "But why this garb upon thee, Marina? Surely thou hast not abjured thy people and thy faith?"

"My people are my husband's people, and my God is his God," said Marina, slipping her hand into that of the knight, who had dismounted and stood beside her.

"And is this thy husband?"

"It is, my father."

"But he did call himself but now a prince."

"And so he is, my father, Prince Juan of Castile, who, falling in love with my poor face when he delivered me from the robbers, allowed himself to fall into thy hands that he might see me again."

Full of wonder, Abal Hassan turned to the knight.

"Is this so?" he asked, as though he could hardly believe his daughter's words.

"It is," he replied.

"And thou art worth a dozen Prince Bajaz, even if thou be a Christian," cried the Moor. "By my faith, but I did come near taking thy life. But let the past be forgotten. Welcome, all knights and ladies, and El Almeda shall know such feasting and gala days as it never knew before."

At this moment Ionsach, the dwarf, suddenly presented himself, and knelt at his master's feet. "Forgive me, oh, my master," he implored. "Up, knave," cried Abal Hassan. "Thou hast my forgiveness. May Allah scourge me, if I would refuse a pardon at such time as this."

In the train came the handmaiden Zara, but, like her mistress, she had given away her liberty. Pedro had followed the example of his master, and made her his own at once.

The joy of the Christian prisoners, who were at once set at liberty, knew no bounds; but when they learned what had chanced to their master while they had been thus immured they did not regret their captivity. Much there was that Abal Hassan wished to know of their flight, and from Marina he learned it all. How, thanks to the guidance of the dwarf, they had avoided every one, and had fallen in with the prince, who with a large retinue was returning to try his fortune at El Almada again; the joy he had evinced at beholding her; and how he had espoused her in the presence of the king and all his court.

Zarik, the turkey, was reinstated in his position, and was also liberally rewarded by Prince Juan for the service he had proffered.

As to the dwarf, he lived to serve his master long and well, and to again receive his full confidence.

THE END.

FACETIÆ.

THE QUEEN'S SHILLING.—Appropriate song for recruiting sergeants: "Bobbing around."—*Fun.*

A CROSS old bachelor suggests that births should be announced under the head of new music.

WHY are redbreasts stupid birds?—Because they come into your garden a robin in the winter only.

"Do you think," asked Mrs. Pepper, "that a little temper is a bad thing in a woman?" "Certainly not, ma'am," replied a gallant philosopher; "it is a good thing, and she ought never to lose it."

"My dear sir," said a candidate, accosting a sturdy wag on the day of an election, "I am very glad to see you." "You needn't be; I've voted," replied the wag.

AD INFINITUM.—The toadies and other creatures that hung about the Imperial court were very common Paris sights until lately. The sulphur consumed near Sedan is said to have got rid of the pests.—*Fun.*

An author, reading his drama in the green-room, remarked that he knew nothing so terrible as reading a piece before such a critical audience. An actress present said she knew something much more terrible than that. "What is it?" exclaimed the author. "To be obliged to sit and hear it," she replied.

BUYING AND SELLING.—It is told of the son of a horse-dealer, a sharp lad, that, when once unexpectedly called upon by his father to mount a horse and exhibit his paces, the little fellow whispered the question, in order to regulate how he should ride, "Are you buying or selling?"

A FRENCH gentleman gives a culinary recipe which can be used in many ways. "Do you wish to know how to cook 'cotelettes à la Metternich?' You have only to broil them like ordinary cutlets, and call them 'cotelettes à la Metternich' when you serve them."

A RETENTIVE RACE.—A sea-captain, trading regularly to the coast of Africa, was invited to meet a committee of a society for the evangelisation of that benighted country. He was asked, among numerous questions touching the habits and religion of the African race, "Do the subjects of the King of Dahomey keep Sunday?" "Keep Sunday!" he replied. "Yes, and everything they can lay their hands on!"

NOTES FROM THE STUBBLE.

The thorough sportsman is scarcely the man to brook an insult, yet he is daily "led by the nose"—of his dog.

Many members of the legal profession are keen sportsmen. Every gunner should give his birds plenty of "law."

Well-broken dogs "drop to shot." The partridges, too, should be taught this trick.

A shooting-box in Norway is out of the reach of most men, but a Norwegian box will be found of capital service in keeping a luncheon warm for your friends—you will thus be able to find them a "warm corner," even though covert-shooting has not yet set in.

Partridges are assiduous in impressing the virtues of "early rising" upon their young. The old birds always "get up" first.

Euclid is not a bad name for a young dog who never makes a mistake as to "a point."

Eschew driving—and walk well up to your birds;

the "Trap" case is only for kid-glove sportsmen, and music-hall cads.

One column of your game-book is headed, "How disposed of."—Many hampers from the Royal Preserves find their way to our hospitals.—An excellent example.—*Fun.*

THE sublimity of impudence displayed by certain writers on the war has been so often reached as to commence, at present, to pall upon the appetite. We must confess, however, to have received an agreeable flip to our jaded palates in the assertion of a correspondent, who takes the trouble to write from Darmstadt to assure readers of the *Times* that the present war is an English war! that the Germans are fighting it to save us such a course at a future date! and that it would be very shabby on our parts did we not subscribe liberally for these gallant champions of our political status!! After such statements as these, the words of all who simply vouch for the existence of a sympathy with Germany, not universally apparent, become as mere husks and chaff. Christian charity not being an argument sufficient to open the national purse, a claim for services rendered is seriously advanced. Verily, we have fallen on strange times!—*Period.*

I'VE SOMETHING TO TELL.

Come out in the beautiful sunshine,
Come out in the golden glow,
Oh, come while the morning zephyrs
Are whispering soft and low.

Come, roam with me over the meadow,
Where the grass is so soft and green,
I have something so sweet to tell you,
My beautiful—beautiful queen!

Come out where the barley is waving,
And quivering under the breeze,
And the tassels are dancing so lightly,
To the hum of the murmuring bees.
Come out to the shadowy woodland,
Where the trees are all emerald green,
For I've something so sweet to tell you,
My beautiful—beautiful queen.

I know of a greenwood bower,
Far out in the woodland wild,
'Tis hidden from all the busy world,
Save the birds and the zephyrs mild.
Below is a velvety carpet,
Above is an emerald screen;

Do come, for I've something to tell you,
My beautiful—beautiful queen.

You are bright as a flower this morning,
With your ribbons of scarlet and snow;
I know you would come, my darling,
My heart had foretold me so.
You wish me to tell you my secret?
Oh, can you not guess what I mean?

Then I'll tell you, my darling: I love you!
My beautiful—beautiful queen! P. S.

GEMS.

NOTHING begets confidence sooner than punctuality.

He that loses his conscience has nothing left worth keeping.

SOCIETY, like shaded silk, must be viewed in all situations, or its colours will deceive us.

HUMAN nature is so constituted, that all see and judge better in the affairs of other men than in their own.

ANY one may do a casual act of good nature, but a continuation of them shows it to be a part of the temperament.

The apprehension of evil is many times worse than the evil itself; and the ill a man fears he shall suffer, he suffers in the very fear of them.

There is not a stream of trouble so deep and swift-running that we may not cross safely over if we have courage to steer and strength to pull.

THE LOVE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

WHAT are half the crimes in the world committed for? What brings into action the best virtues? The desire of possessing. Of possessing what? Not mere money, but every species of the beautiful which money can purchase. A man lies hid in a little, dirty, smoky m, for twenty years of his life, and sums up as many columns of figures as would reach round half the earth if they were laid at length. He gets rich. What does he do with his riches? He buys a large, well-proportioned house; in the arrangement of his furniture he gratifies himself with all the beauties which splendid colours, regular figures, and smooth surfaces can convey; he has the beauties of variety and association in his grounds; the cup out of which he drinks his tea is adorned with beautiful figures; the chair in which he sits is covered with smooth, shining

leather, his tablecloth is of the most beautiful damask, mirrors reflect the light from every quarter of the room; pictures of the best masters feed his eyes with all the beauties of imagination.

A million of human creatures are employed in this country in ministering to this feeling of the beautiful. It is only a barbarous, ignorant people that can ever be occupied by the necessities of life alone. If to eat, and to drink, and to be warm, were the only passions of our mind, we should all be what the lowest of us all are at this day. The love of the beautiful calls man to fresh exertions, and awakens him to a more noble life; and the glory of it is, that as painters imitate, and poets sing, and sculptors carve, and architects rear up the gorgeous trophies of their skill—as everything becomes beautiful, and orderly, and magnificent—the activity of the mind rises to still greater and to better objects.

MISCELLANEOUS.

"No honeymoon," is the last marriage announcement following "no cards" of the nobodies.

It is proposed to erect a new poultry market on some of the waste land in the vicinity of the Holborn Viaduct.

The length of the tunnel through Mont Cenis, executed up to the 15th August, was 11,547 metres. The distance to terminate the work was 673 metres, of which an average of 125 is accomplished monthly.

An Irishman was bound over by the police magistrate the other day to keep the peace towards all Her Majesty's subjects, as the bond always runs. "All right, yer worship," replied Pat; "I'll observe the bond, but heaven help the first foreigner I get my hands on."

It is not correct that the title to the barony of Gwydyr becomes extinct by the death of Lord Wyloughby d'Eresby. Mr. Peter Robert Burrell, cousin and next heir male to the deceased nobleman, succeeds to the title, and will take his seat in the House of Lords as Baron Gwydyr.

The King of Prussia on the night of the 16th August, slept on the field among his troops, and was very well pleased to get a plate of rice and soup from a neighbouring camp-kettle, after a day—sixteen hours some say—on horseback, and that at the age of seventy-three.

We must look sharp after our Christmas beef! 400 oxen recently landed at Southampton, and intended to supply the English market, have been eagerly bought up by French agents at 30s. a head and sent to France. Butcher's meat has already risen at Southampton in consequence of the exportation of cattle.

THE REVENUE.—The revenue returns last published show the receipts between the 1st of April and 3rd September to have been 25,350,571l., against 23,682,224l. in the corresponding period of last year. Expenditure, 25,680,712l., against 30,150,618s. The balances in the Banks of England and Ireland amounted to 3,807,325l., against 2,203,215l.

THE MANUFACTURE OF RIFLES.—An official return which has just been prepared shows that since the Snider principle 58,667 rifles of that kind have been manufactured and 400,886 muzzle-loaders converted into breechloaders—total, 459,553. In addition to these there have been produced 1,350 new breech-loading carbines and 122,629 converted. There were in store on the 8th of August at home stations 231,240 Snider rifles and carbines, and at foreign stations (excluding India) 59,039—total, 284,279. Of breech-loading carbines and muskets of other descriptions there were at the same date 16,500 at home stations and 144 at foreign stations. There is thus a grand total of 300,923 breech-loading arms in store. 164,000 breech-loading arms are ordered for delivery in the course of the year ending the 31st of March 1871. The number of rifles of this class actually issued to the troops in 1869, 362.

SOMETHING LIKE A WHEEL.—There recently arrived at West Hartlepool a monster fly wheel, intended for the rolling mills of Messrs. Richardson and Sons. It measures 22½ feet in diameter, and seventeen by thirteen inches thickness of rim, and weighs 25 tons 5 cwt. In order to transfer it to West Hartlepool, a thing impossible to attempt on the railway, a special carriage, weighing seven tons, had to be built for its conveyance, and besides, some chains, of about four tons, were employed, making with the wheel a total of about thirty-seven tons; and to move this, no less than thirty-two horses were used. Although the distance was but eleven miles, it occupied nearly three days in coming. This arose from the steepness of part of the road, and from the fact that a cottage had to be pulled down, and a toll-gate removed on the line of route to allow it to pass. Many hundreds of persons witnessed its arrival at Hartlepool. The casting was done at the Norton Iron Works, near Stockton.

The Harbest Home!

POLKA.

Vivace.

"Long may the yellow harvest glad thy happy land;
Long may thy wooden walls repel each hostile band!"

C. E. GRENVILLE.

PIANO.

f

mf

8va

cres.

8va

f

Minore.

Stac. dolce. p

Scherzo.

1st time.

2nd time.

cres.

ff

cres.

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